

Puerto Rico independence march set for Aug. 12 in New York

BY MAREA HIMELGRIN

NEW YORK — Preparations for the "March for Independence for Puerto Rico," to be held here August 12, are in their final stage. The march will begin at noon at 14th Street and Avenue C and proceed up First Avenue to the United Nations, where a rally will take place. The action is set for the weekend before hearings on Puerto Rico's status will be held before the UN Commission on Decolonization.

Since 1972 the UN commission has held that Puerto Rico is a U.S. colony and that the Puerto Rican people have the right to self-determination and independence. This year the U.S. government is seeking to have the discussion on Puerto Rico tabled until after a proposed plebiscite on the status of Puerto Rico is held on the island, probably in 1991. Both Rafael Hernández Colón, the governor of Puerto Rico, and the George Bush administration have called for the plebiscite, and the U.S. Senate is currently discussing the rules that will govern how it is worded and organized.

The August 12 demonstration is to denounce these moves by the U.S. government to mask its domination of Puerto Rico.

The demands of the demonstration are a set of minimum requirements for a plebiscite ruled by international law and under the supervision of the UN. They include the transfer of all powers to the people of Puerto Rico; the release of all Puerto Rican political prisoners; the withdrawal of all federal troops, armed forces, and police; and the economic reparations necessary for the transition from colonialism to independence.

In June independence supporters in Puerto Rico organized the biggest demonstration for independence — some 80,000 people — in nearly 20 years. The spirit of unity that marked that action has helped inspire the coalition organizing the August 12 demonstration in the United States.

A regional organizers' meeting held in New York on July 29 heard reports from several cities on progress in building the demonstration.

José López reported that a press conference will be held on August 12.

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'March Aug. 12,' urges socialist



Militant/Selva Nebbia

James Harris, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York mayor, calls for broad participation in Puerto Rico independence march. See statement on page 25.

Castro: 'We will not sugarcoat the truth'

'Historic moment' poses challenges for Cuba

BY LARRY SEIGLE AND SELVA NEBBIA

CAMAGÜEY, Cuba — At a time of growing "difficulties in the world revolutionary movement," said Cuban President Fidel Castro here July 26, "we have to call things by their right names."

"We will not sugarcoat the truth," he added.

Addressing a crowd of 150,000 people here, and a nationwide television audience, the Cuban Communist Party leader stressed that "we need to know where we are, what world we live in, what problems threaten the creative efforts of our people."

"The future carries threats because of the political course of the imperialists," Castro added, "their beliefs, their euphoria that socialism is in decline and that the time is coming when Cuba will have to pay the price for more than 30 years of revolution. But they won't collect anything here!"

The Cuban leader spoke at a rally marking the 36th anniversary of the 1953 attack on the Moncada military barracks led by young revolutionaries who later formed the July 26 Movement.

In his speech, Castro reviewed in detail the impressive gains in economic and social development that have taken place in the province of Camagüey since the revolution, and in particular since the process known here as "rectification" got under way in 1986. Decisive in the recent advances, Castro emphasized, has been the revival and spread of volunteer labor brigades. This reflects a deepening of the communist revolution and a renewed understanding of the place of vol-



Militant/Selva Nebbia

Crowd at July 26 rally listens to Fidel Castro describe imperialist threats and growing "difficulties in the world revolutionary movement." Cuba knows "what we have, what we can do, and what we can count on," the Cuban president said.

unteer labor that had been advocated by Ernesto Che Guevara in the 1960s.

"Voluntary labor had collapsed, but the process of rectification has raised it to levels never before reached in the history of the

revolution," Castro said. He added that in Camagüey Province so much has been accomplished because of the leadership by example in voluntary labor being provided by

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Eastern strikers protest new flights

BY SUSAN LaMONT

Striking Eastern Airlines' workers — determined to win wider support for their fight and to respond to the airline's start-up of more flights — organized rallies and expanded picket lines in a number of cities in late July and early August. In some cases, these were the largest strike-support actions held since the walkout began five months ago.

Eastern's strike-breaking "reorganization" plan calls for 350 flights August 1, up from 226 July 1. The added July flights marked the first stage in the airline's attempt to resume operations. Eastern had been virtually grounded since the strike by 17,000 Machinists union members, flight attendants, and pilots began March 4.

In Miami, more than 1,300 strikers and supporters from other unions held a "walk-through" at Miami International Airport July 30 in the biggest show of strength there since the strike began. The walk-through was led by Transport Workers Union Local 553 President Mary Jane Barry, International Association of Machinists District 100 President Charles Bryan, and local union officials.

Because airport restrictions banned picket signs or chanting, protesters wore red strike T-shirts or other union shirts to identify themselves as they ringed the half-mile-long terminal for more than an hour. Members of many other unions took part, along with Haitian community leader and Catholic priest Gerard Jean Juste and activists from the Haitian group Veye-Yo.

Walk-through participants, who were ferried on buses from the strike headquarters, scattered throughout the airport. As union

officials passed through their areas, they fell in line behind, two abreast.

The action had a big impact on passengers and other airport workers, many of whom put on "Stop Lorenzo" stickers to show support for the march. Strike activists had organized marshals and prepared participants well to maintain the legal, peaceful character of the walk-through and to avoid provocations — especially from the cops who were out in force — and from Eastern management.

On August 1 at the Detroit Metropolitan

Airport, 1,000 strikers, unionists, students, and others picketed and rallied to protest the start-up of Eastern flights there for the first time since the strike began.

The bigger picket lines during the day before the rally got a favorable response from travelers, and especially from other airline workers. "All airline workers' futures are riding on the outcome of the Eastern strike," said one American Airlines flight attendant.

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Celebrations of Cuban revolution's 30 years held in cities across U.S.

BY PETER THIERJUNG

The 30th anniversary of the Cuban revolution was celebrated by hundreds of people across the United States during the last week of July.

One of the largest New York meetings in support of the Cuban revolution in recent years took place on July 29. More than 260 people filled the Casa de las Américas hall.

"We are convinced," Rafael Pizarro, a national committee member of the Venceremos Brigade, told the meeting, "that the time has come for decisive action for our right to travel to Cuba, and against U.S. attacks against the Cuban people."

Saluting revolutionary Cuba on behalf of the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa, Nozizwe Mvemve hailed the country's rectification effort as a "necessary process of deepening socialism."

In introducing Mvemve, Joel Schwartz, president of Local 446 of the Civil Service Employees Association and co-chair of his union's statewide Committee Against Apart-

Prison officials deny defense committee mailings to Mark Curtis. See page 4.

heid, urged the audience to step up its southern Africa solidarity work, remembering that "whatever work we do around southern Africa we must talk about Cuba and Cuba's role in the struggle."

Esmeralda Brown, a Panamanian-born activist in New York, hailed Cuba's principled defense of Panama's sovereignty against U.S.

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Managua book festival draws big crowds

BY PETE CLIFFORD

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — "Big response to book festival" ran the headline to one of many articles in *Barricada*, daily paper of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, during the International Bookfair held here July 20-26.

Some 450 publishers from 42 countries displayed their books. They came from Latin America, Europe, and North America, as well as from the Soviet Union, Angola, Libya, Vietnam, Iran, and China. Titles from 15 publishers were displayed at the U.S. stand, 12 at the Canadian, and 10 at the British.

Thousands of Nicaraguans took advantage of this broad display to attend the bookfair. Many were students and professional workers after technical and scientific books. Others brought young children attracted to the theme of the bookfair on children's books.

Speaking at the opening of the bookfair on July 20th, Ernesto Cardenal, president of the National Council of Culture, emphasized that "the fair is an example of the democracy and pluralism that the revolution represents. The most diverse ideas are shown in the books that are here. No book has been reviewed, censored or prohibited."

Cardenal contrasted this to the policy during the Somoza tyranny. Books were hard to obtain then, he said, "but since the revolution, more books have been published in Nicaragua than in all its previous history."

The fair was officially opened by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, who was joined at the opening ceremony by Vice-president Sergio Ramírez and Minister of the Interior Tomás Borge.

Large crowds were around the IMELSA booth — Nicaragua's national book distributor.

Nicaragua's two main publishers, Editorial Vanguardia and Editorial Nueva Nicaragua, also attracted a lot of attention. At the Editorial Vanguardia booth the best-selling title was *La paciente impaciencia* (*The Patient Impatience*) a semi-autobiographical account by Tomás Borge.

Salman Rushdie

One feature of the Editorial Vanguardia stall that captured some interest was the prominent display of *La sonrisa del jaguar* (*The Jaguar's Smile*), an account by Salman Rushdie of his impressions of revolutionary Nicaragua. The Nicaraguan publishers, who brought the book out earlier this year, said the book was "well received" at the fair. Rushdie has been the subject of an international campaign by some Muslims to threaten his life and attempt to get another book of his, *The Satanic Verses*, withdrawn from circulation.

Joining Nicaraguan writers at several forums during the fair were other writers from Latin America, including Eduardo Galeano, the Uruguayan writer, and Salvadoran Claribel Alegria.

A booth organized by the Palestinian Liberation Organization with material about their liberation struggle in Spanish and by Editorial Sistema Venceremos from El Salvador were popular. The Salvadoran booth was crowded out several times by Nicaraguans watching the video film *Tiempo de Victoria* (*Times of Victory*) of the FMLN.

The United States Information Service — a government agency — focused its display on novels and technical books.

The booth from Cuba displayed a wide range of books, from scientific to children's books, as well as a selection of Ernesto Che Guevara and Fidel Castro's writings. A large poster announced the Fourth International Bookfair in Havana Feb. 6-12, 1990.

Publishers at the U.S. booth included South End Press, Curbstone, and Pathfinder.

The Pathfinder stall was a major focus for political discussion and book buying. Pathfinder publishes books by many important working-class and revolutionary leaders. Its display featured books published and distributed by Pathfinder in English, Spanish, French, and Swedish. This attracted many Nicaraguans, as well as large numbers of international visitors in Nicaragua to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the revolution.

Several people commented that they'd already seen or bought Pathfinder books at bookstores in Nicaragua. IMELSA, the national book distribution agency, places Pathfinder books in bookstores in the country. Included at the IMELSA booth at the fair was

a selection of Pathfinder books by Guevara, Castro, Rosa Luxemburg, and leaders of the Nicaraguan revolution.

'Nelson Mandela Speaks'

A total of 324 books, pamphlets, and magazines were sold from the Pathfinder stall, taking in just over \$1,000. The most popular authors were Nelson Mandela, Malcolm X, Castro, and Guevara. Highest selling was *Habla Nelson Mandela* (*Nelson Mandela Speaks*), with 24 copies. The English-language *Nelson Mandela: The Struggle Is My Life* also sold well from the Pathfinder stall, as well as from a booth with books from the International Defence and Aid Fund, the main publishers of works on the anti-apartheid struggle in southern Africa.

Interest in Africa also extended to *Thomas Sankara Speaks*. "He was here with Ortega," said a Sandinista soldier thumbing through the pages to see the photos of the visit to Nicaragua in 1986 of the now slain leader of Burkina Faso. Although the book is not available in Spanish, several back issues of the Spanish-language magazine *Perspectiva Mundial* carrying speeches by Sankara were sold.

From Bluefields on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, government leader Lumberto Campbell was one of many who stopped by the stall to buy a range of Malcolm X books, including the newly published *Malcolm X: The Last Speeches*. Campbell explained how the revolutionary leader was becoming

known in the Bluefields area.

Mark Curtis defense

A display about frame-up victim Mark Curtis attracted attention and spurred discussion about politics in the United States. Several copies of the pamphlet *50 años de guerra encubierta, el FBI contra los derechos democráticos* (*50 Years of Government Spying, The FBI versus Democratic Rights*), an account of the fight for political rights in the United States, were sold.

Significant sales of books and pamphlets by Castro and Guevara were a feature not only of the Pathfinder stall but also from Argentinian publishers Ediciones Antarca and Dialéctica. Most popular were books reprinting speeches by Fidel Castro on the 30th anniversary of the Cuban revolution and *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism*, by Carlos Tablada.

By the end of the fair 42 subscriptions to the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *Lutte ouvrière* had been bought from the stall, as well as 101 single copies of the publications.

These new subscribers came from 14 countries.

Of the 24 new subscribers to *Perspectiva Mundial*, 15 were from Nicaragua. Others came from countries ranging from Guatemala to Spain. In addition 13 copies of *New International*, a Marxist magazine, and its French-language counterpart, *Nouvelle Internationale*, were sold.

At the end of the bookfair, the publishers contributed two copies of each book displayed to Nicaragua's national library.

Author Randall wins case against deportation

BY RONI McCANN

NEW YORK — Because she is a U.S. citizen, author Margaret Randall cannot be deported, ruled the Board of Immigration Appeals on July 27, in a victory for her case.

"For five years the U.S. government has been attempting to deport Margaret Randall for her political beliefs," said Center for Constitutional Rights lawyer David Cole in a telephone interview.

"Now the highest judiciary body within the Immigration and Naturalization Service has ruled that the government should never have begun the process in the first place, because she was a U.S. citizen," said Cole. "We are extremely happy about it," he added.

Randall, who was born in the United States, applied for Mexican citizenship in 1967 while residing in that country, when prospective employers told her it was necessary for getting a job. U.S. embassy officials erroneously informed her she was automatically giving up her U.S. citizenship in the process.

Since then, Randall has also lived in Cuba and Nicaragua, working as a writer, photographer, translator, and editor. She is the author

of *Women in Cuba*, *Sandino's Daughters*, and other books.

In 1984 she returned to the United States and applied for permanent residency status. Randall's husband, parents, and oldest son are all U.S. citizens, but the INS denied her application and began deportation proceedings.

The recent ruling overturned a 1986 decision by an immigration judge who ordered Randall deported, stating her writings advocated "the doctrines of world communism." The judge based his decision on provisions in the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, which gives immigration officials the right to exclude and deport noncitizens from the United States on the basis of their political beliefs.

By saying that Randall had been a U.S. citizen all along, the Appeals Board avoided ruling on whether noncitizens can be excluded or deported for their political views.

Mexican-born Socialist Workers Party leader Héctor Marroquín, now living and working in Iowa, immediately sent a telegram congratulating Randall.

"Like my victory last year in winning permanent residency, which was built on a

historic ruling in the Socialist Workers Party case against government victimizations, your success is another blow to the reactionary McCarran-Walter Act and political exclusions based on one's political activities or ideas.

"Our victories will strengthen the fight for justice for Mark Curtis, which we both support," Curtis is a unionist and political activist from Des Moines, Iowa, serving a 25-year jail term on frame-up charges of rape and burglary.

Although the ruling in Randall's case cannot be appealed, the INS can ask the board to reconsider its decision or ask the attorney general to reverse the ruling. The INS has sought and received a 30-day stay on the decision.

"We're asking supporters to write letters to the attorney general urging him not to review or reverse the Board of Immigration Appeals decision of July 27," said rights lawyer Cole. "He and the government should wash their hands of this matter."

Letters can be sent to U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh, Department of Justice, 10th and Constitution Ave. Rm. 4400, Washington, D.C. 20530.

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British rail union strengthened after series of job actions

BY ROB HIGLEY

LONDON — The National Union of Railwaymen decided here to suspend its series of weekly one-day strikes on July 28 after winning significant concessions from British Rail management. The increased wages — from 7 to 8.8 percent — have blown a large hole through the government's 7 percent ceiling for public sector workers. Official inflation figures currently stand at 8.3 percent.

British Rail has agreed to continue talks on its proposal to end national bargaining with the union over pay and working conditions. Previously British Rail intended to impose the new bargaining structure in October.

In the aftermath of this, the 20,000 workers on the London Underground (subway) have won two of their key demands: a comparable rise in basic pay to that won by rail workers and the withdrawal by management of their "Action Stations Plan," which would have abolished seniority and considerably worsened employment conditions.

Nonetheless, the London Underground was shut down again in the 14th one-day strike because management still refused to concede the £65 (US\$104) per week increase claimed by tube drivers.

In contrast to these advances, the leadership of the Transport and General Workers Union (T&GWU) summarily called off the three-week-old national dock strike on August 1.

This marks a rout of the union on the docks, historically one of the bastions of the British trade union movement, by the port employers and the government.

Railworkers solid

The settlement with the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) came after the sixth of a weekly series of one-day strikes.

The settlement made by the NUR, however, was on the terms already agreed to by the other unions. Only a major escalation of the action could have forced further concessions. Nonetheless, the campaign of industrial action has strengthened the union. Rail workers across the industry were solid throughout the dispute, and workers have felt the strength of their combined unity. The NUR actions may strengthen the resolve of other workers who face negotiations on wages in the fall.

Bosses, government, court

Clearly, this will now be mitigated by the disaster on the docks. At no time was the full strength of the 1.3 million-strong T&GWU ever mobilized as was required to face the powerful alliance of the port bosses, government, and courts.

Instead, action was delayed for three months to comply with the maneuverings of the courts and the government. This was in the face of determined unofficial action,

which had to be abandoned as a result.

Only on the eve of throwing in the towel was an instruction issued to the 200,000 T&GWU truck drivers not to cross dockers' picket lines. The contrast with rail couldn't be more stark. As a result, by the time the strike was abandoned, 2,928 of the original 9,400 dockers on strike accepted the employers' layoff scheme, which paid out a maximum of £35,000 (US\$56,000).

When the bosses jacked up their threats and intimidation, some further 3,800 felt unable to continue striking and went back to work. At the end of July, therefore, at a delegates' conference, the union agreed to organize a series of mass meetings at key ports to bring dockers who have returned to work back out on strike. Ron Todd, the union's general secretary, was to address these meetings.

Flying pickets

Flying pickets were organized to fan out to nonstriking ports, and the decision was taken on the truck drivers.

The back-to-work decision has been taken without the union winning local deals or even the reinstatement of fired dockers. At the Tilbury dock in London, one of the biggest in the country, all 16 shop stewards have been fired and the union decertified.

In an attempt to salvage something, therefore, stewards at a number of ports will attempt to maintain the dispute at the local level. These contradictory settlements will set the scene for other disputes and pending claims.

Local government white collar workers



G.M. Cookson

Members of the National Union of Railwaymen march in London on July 18

have rejected an increased management offer and are to pull out 30,000 of their half million membership in selective all-out action in key areas of local government. They have already organized six days of strike action by their whole membership.

More than 1 million local authority manual workers are pushing for a substantial wage

increase. Engineering unions have selected a dozen top companies for all-out strike action in demand for a reduction in the working week. Post office workers and workers at Ford also have pay claims pending.

Rob Higley is a member of the National Union of Railwaymen in London.

South African union congress meets

BY DOREEN WEPPLER

LONDON — The 1-million-strong Congress of South African Trade Unions recently ended its convention in Johannesburg, South Africa, with a call for a week-long campaign against apartheid before the September parliamentary elections.

COSATU will also challenge the South African regime's Labour Relations Act, which greatly restricts union activity and makes sympathy strikes and consumer boycotts illegal.

"We are seeking the shortest possible route toward removing that monster of apartheid," said COSATU General Secretary Jay Naidoo.

Speaking to the delegates on the second day of the convention, Frank Chikane, general secretary of the South African Council of Churches, backed the struggle against the Labour Relations Act, saying the act eroded the workers' right to work for justice and peace.

Some 1,900 delegates attended the mid-July convention, held in a fairground outside Soweto. Participants came from member unions in COSATU and unions in the smaller National Council of Trade Unions. Observers were from United Democratic Front affiliates, religious organizations, sports groups, and teachers' associations.

One of the resolutions adopted by the delegates called on neighboring African countries known as the Frontline States, the Organization of African Unity, and international organizations to increase pressure on the South African government.

With other democratic organizations restricted by the apartheid regime, the COSATU convention became an important forum for debating the major issues facing the struggle against apartheid today. COSATU said it was the most significant meeting to be held in the country this year.

COSATU is made up of 16 unions, includ-

ing the National Union of Mineworkers with 210,000 members, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa with 188,000 members, more than 100,000 Garment and Allied Workers, and others.

Last February COSATU was forbidden to engage in political activity by the apartheid government. At the same time the regime banned 17 organizations in the mass democratic movement.

London's *Financial Times* reported that the calls for protest "publicly defied a government ban on political activity." The South African regime declared all political protest illegal under state of emergency regulations imposed more than three years ago.

"The reality is that the apartheid system is in very serious difficulty — economically and politically," said Govan Mbeki, head of the African National Congress Foreign Affairs Department in Lusaka, Zambia. "The emergency hasn't worked in terms of breaking the morale of the people," he added.

The COSATU convention took place as a wave of trade union action was spreading throughout the auto industry. Some 8,000 workers demonstrated at Volkswagen recently, demanding national bargaining. A strike by 2,500 workers shut down a Mercedes Benz factory. At the big Toyota plant in Durban workers struck, demanding national bargaining rights, to take steps toward establishing uniform wages and conditions throughout the country.

Auto worker visits Virginia miners' Camp Solidarity

BY JOE ALLOR

LEBANON, Va. — The Fenton, Missouri, Chrysler plant where I work shut down for a few weeks so I went to visit striking miners in Virginia.

My coworkers and I had been talking about the three-month strike by members of the United Mine Workers of America against Pittston Coal. I wanted to find out what our union local could do to help support their struggle.

The miners at Pittston have been waging a fight for a decent contract. In June they were backed by tens of thousands of fellow miners as UMWA members walked off their jobs across the country. Pittston's two remaining union mines, in Kentucky and West Virginia, struck as well.

The miners have received wide support, often teaming up with striking airline workers from Eastern at rallies, picket lines, and marches.

One attraction has been the solidarity camps set up by the strikers in the Virginia coalfields. The thousands of miners on sym-

pathy strikes went back to work in July, but a steady stream of unionists and supporters have continued to visit the camps as a way to extend their solidarity.

When I arrived, more than 100 miners were staying at the camp here. A week earlier 1,000 striking miners and supporters came down along with several busloads of workers from Toledo, Ohio, who are members of the United Auto Workers.

Steelworkers who had visited from Pittsburgh donated a banner that hung at the camp, and a delegation of sugar refinery workers from New Orleans brought money they had collected for the strike.

Miners I spoke to were all in good spirits and remained solid. They took me to the portal of Pittston's Moss No. 3 mine where UMWA Vice-president Cecil Roberts had recently been arrested for leading a sit-in.

On July 26 the mine union's International Executive Board met and issued a call for all supporters of the Pittston strike to come to the coalfields.

At a rally in St. Paul, Virginia, UMWA President Richard Trumka asked all people

of good conscience to come and view "a system that doesn't have room for workers."

"We're going to bring in famous people, common people, elected officials, schoolteachers, and everyone else," he said.

"They'll keep coming until every one of you has a contract and every one of our pensioners is taken care of," he added.

Russell County Circuit Judge Donald McGlothlin, Jr., fined the union \$4.5 million on July 27, stating that UMWA members have "intimidated and attempted to intimidate by threats of violence Pittston's replacement workers." That brings the total fines against the union in state and federal courts to nearly \$10 million. The fines are being appealed by the union.

While spending time at Camp Solidarity and talking with strikers on the picket lines I again realized the importance of supporting this fight. The miners and I exchanged phone numbers and addresses so we can get UMWA speakers up to unions in the St. Louis area.

Joe Allor is a member of UAW Local 110 in Fenton.

No issue next week

The *Militant* will not appear next week so that our staff can participate in the International Active Workers and Socialist Educational Conference and Young Socialist Alliance national convention to be held in Oberlin, Ohio.

We will resume publication with the issue dated August 25.

From Dominica to Britain, Curtis gains support

Mark Curtis is a unionist and political activist from Des Moines, Iowa, who is serving a 25-year jail term on frame-up charges of rape and burglary. The Mark Curtis Defense Committee is leading an international campaign to fight for justice for Curtis. To contact

mous British folksinging duo, and Sheila Rowbotham, a well-known feminist writer in Britain.

Mark Curtis supporters in Miami organized a speak-out for justice for Curtis on July 21. Several commu-

DEFEND MARK CURTIS!

the committee, write Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa, 50311; telephone (515) 246-1695.

Rosie Douglas from the Caribbean island of Dominica recently became a sponsor of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee.

In the late 1960s and early '70s, Douglas lived in Canada, where he was active in the Black community and on campus in struggles against racism. He was declared a "risk to national security" by the Canadian government, which imprisoned him for 17 months for participating in a 1969 sit-in against racism at Sir George Williams University. He was ordered deported by Canadian authorities in 1975. The campaign against Douglas' deportation became widely known.

Since that time, Douglas has been active in Dominica. He is currently the international secretary of the Dominica Labour Party and a member of Parliament.

National docks shop stewards committee leader Jimmy Nolan from Liverpool, England, has endorsed the Curtis defense effort. Nolan helped lead recent labor actions by dock workers in Britain to defend their union against union-busting attacks by Margaret Thatcher's government.

Ken Livingstone and Brian Sedgemore, Labour Party members of Britain's Parliament, have also become sponsors, as have Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl, a fa-

nity activists participated, including Lavaris Gaudin, a leader of the Haitian organization Veye-Yo; Roland Rolle of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute; and Vonnell Tillman, the mother of Steven Tillman, a Black youth shot by Miami police three years ago. He is paralyzed from the neck down and recently won a civil rights suit against the cop who shot him. Valerie Williams of the Haitian Refugee Center gave the fund appeal.

The \$1,300 raised at the speak-out will go toward a \$100,000 fund projected by the Mark Curtis Defense Committee to cover legal expenses and the costs of publicizing Curtis' case around the world. November 1 is the deadline, and funds are urgently needed. Checks can be made payable and mailed to the defense committee in Des Moines.

Frank Barnard, president of the Auckland-Tomoana Freezing Workers Union in New Zealand, has written to Keith Morris, father of the young Black woman Mark Curtis was falsely convicted of raping. Barnard retracted an earlier letter in which he expressed sympathy for Morris' efforts to win support for Curtis' conviction.

Barnard was one of the first supporters in New Zealand for the Mark Curtis defense campaign. He, along with other officials of the union, signed a petition protesting the police arrest and beating of Curtis and called for the charges against Curtis to be dropped.

However, following the trial and



Paula Malay (left), a prominent human rights activist in the Philippines, met with Kate Kaku last May. Malay became a sponsor of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee.

conviction of Curtis, Barnard received a letter signed by Morris that persuaded him to write back, apologizing for having supported the Curtis defense effort.

The letter signed by Morris has been circulated within the international labor movement by the U.S. Workers League to disrupt the Curtis defense effort. It falsely claims that Curtis was proven guilty of rape, defends the Des Moines police, and slanders Curtis' supporters.

Barnard explains in his retraction, that "If Mr. Curtis actually raped Demetria then he deserves all he got, but if it is not proved beyond doubt, then he's had a very bad break indeed. While the guy rots in jail with such a huge sentence, I am not prepared to live with that any longer."

"What I wrote to you earlier I now hereby withdraw until somebody, anybody can convince me that Mr. Curtis has had a fair shake," he said.

Last May Kate Kaku, a leader of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee and Curtis' wife, spent three weeks in the Philippines to build support

for the defense campaign.

Kaku was able to meet the president, Benigno Enriquez, and other members of the meat workers' union at Swift's Laguna plant, south of Manila. Curtis was a meat-packer at the Swift plant in Des Moines.

Enriquez readily identified with the issues involved in the Curtis frame-up. He detailed appalling working conditions at Swift that workers are fighting against. He cited the example of management compelling workers to toil around the clock for up to six days without a break when coworkers are absent for injury or suspension.

Swift used armed vigilantes and the military to intimidate union activists inside the plant and in their communities, Enriquez explained. His immediate predecessor resigned the post of union president after repeated death threats. The company had a "voluntary resignation" program for union militants, he told Kaku, even offering to pay them half their basic wages for a period if they would quit.

Kaku also participated in a Manila regional conference of

KAPATID, an organization of friends and relatives of political prisoners. Paula Malay addressed the gathering. She is the mother-in-law of Saturnino Ocampo, one of the longest held political prisoners under the Marcos dictatorship. He escaped his jailers in 1985, to re-emerge as a leader of the Philippine National Democratic Front. Ocampo, along with Malay's daughter, Carolina, was arrested by the Aquino government on July 27. Malay became a sponsor of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee.

The Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, a church-based human rights organization, invited Kaku to address their weekly staff meeting. TFDP national Chairperson Mariani Dimaranan, a Catholic nun, was an early endorser of the fight against Curtis' frame-up. TFDP's monthly magazine, *Philippine Human Rights Update*, reported Kaku's talk in detail.

The international campaign against Iowa prison authorities' restrictions on non-English literature and correspondence for Curtis and other prisoners, and for the right of prisoners to share literature with each other continues.

Protests should be addressed to: John A. Thalacker, Warden, Iowa State Men's Reformatory, Anamosa, Iowa 52205.

Copies should be sent to: Attorney General Thomas J. Miller, Hoover State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319; Paul Grossheim, Director, Department of Corrections, Capitol Annex, 523 E. 12th St., Des Moines, Iowa 50309; and the Mark Curtis Defense Committee.

Linda Joyce from Miami, Ray Davis from London, and James Pearson and Russell Johnson from New Zealand contributed to this column.

Curtis defense secretary tours southern Minnesota

BY CRAIG HONTES

AUSTIN, Minn. — Hazel Zimmerman, secretary of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, toured southern Minnesota recently winning new support and raising funds to aid

Curtis denied mail; protests needed

Prison authorities at the Iowa State Men's Reformatory in Anamosa have denied Mark Curtis three packets mailed by the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. The packets contain defense committee and other correspondence, new endorsements of the defense effort, news articles related to Curtis' case, and copies of messages sent to prison authorities protesting the ban on non-English literature and correspondence, and on the right of prisoners to share literature.

Curtis reported this action by prison officials to John Gaige, a leader of the defense committee, who visited Curtis in prison on August 2. Officials say it is prison policy not to forward photocopied materials to prisoners. Until now Curtis has received all packets regularly sent by the defense committee.

"This denial by prison authorities," Gaige said, "prevents Curtis from knowledgeably discussing his fight against injustice and showing other prisoners examples of the support for his case. We urge people around the world to immediately send messages demanding that prison authorities release the packets to Curtis."

the campaign for justice for Mark Curtis.

Curtis is a Des Moines, Iowa, unionist and political activist serving a 25-year jail term on frame-up rape and burglary charges.

On July 22 Zimmerman spoke to a meeting in Rochester at Assisi Heights, a convent of Franciscan nuns, which has been a center for Central America solidarity activity. She reviewed the facts of Curtis' frame-up and the developments in his case, including recent victories won because of international protests.

Zimmerman called on supporters to continue the protest campaign urging prison authorities to allow Curtis and other prisoners to receive non-English correspondence and literature of their choice and to end restrictions on prisoners' rights to share literature with each other.

Despite their ban on non-English literature, prison officials recently granted Curtis permission to receive an issue each of the Spanish-language magazine *Perspectiva Mundial* and the French-language magazine *Lutte ouvrière*. Zimmerman said this was an important partial victory.

Speaking along with Zimmerman were Walt King, a Vietnam veteran who has actively campaigned for Curtis in his United Auto Workers union local; Dale Chidester, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers union Local 9; and Noemi Muggli, an immigrant from Costa Rica.

Chidester worked at the Ottumwa, Iowa, Hormel meat-packing plant for 10 years before transferring to the Austin Hormel plant. He described how he has changed in the last 10 years as a result of struggles against concessions in the meat-packing industry and working in a nonunion coal mine. These experiences, he said, convinced him to speak up for Curtis.

Muggli called for a united effort on behalf of Curtis saying Curtis' only crime was that he defended immigrant workers in his factory.

Twenty-seven people came to the meeting, including several unionists, farmers, and 14 nuns from the convent. An aide to U.S. Congressman Tim Penny endorsed the defense effort after attending the meeting.

The following day Zimmerman spoke in Albert Lea at St. Theodore Catholic Church. Three members of Club Azteca, a Latino organization that previously endorsed the de-

fense effort, attended, as did two town ministers.

Early in the tour the Austin United Support Group heard Zimmerman. The group organized support for striking meat-packers in 1985-86 at the Hormel plant. Many members knew Curtis and were familiar with the case.

Two television stations filmed Zimmerman during her tour. Daily newspapers in Albert Lea, Austin, and Rochester, and two radio stations carried interviews with her.

Supporters of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee raised more than \$400 through the tour.

Philippine rebel leaders arrested

BY PETER THIERJUNG

Philippine rebel leaders Saturnino Ocampo and Carolina Malay-Ocampo were arrested July 27 in Manila by the paramilitary Philippine Constabulary.

The arrests came just four days after the military issued "Wanted—dead or alive" posters and \$50,000 rewards for each of 35 leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

The Philippine government charges that Ocampo, Malay, and other CP leaders were responsible for kidnap and multiple murder. In recent weeks several mass graves have been discovered in Quezon and Laguna provinces. Authorities claim the victims were murdered by rebel forces because they were suspected government informants.

In 1986 Ocampo, representing the National Democratic Front, negotiated a 60-day cease-fire agreement with the Aquino government. The NDF is the political arm of New People's Army, the guerrilla forces that are fighting to topple the Aquino regime. The

cease-fire was widely welcomed by workers and peasants who saw in it the opportunity to win some space for open political discussion, debate, and organizing.

The Philippine military engineered blowing up the cease-fire by firing on a march of 20,000 peasants in January 1987. Nineteen of the demonstrators were massacred. Since then, the government has been on a military offensive against the guerrillas and there has been a government-led crackdown on workers' and peasants' organizations. Death-squad activity seen during the years of the Marcos dictatorship resurfaced.

Employing tactics used in Vietnam, including creation of strategic hamlets and saturation bombing, the Philippine military dislocated more than 200,000 peasants in 1988. The Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, a human rights organization, reported for the same year that 242 political activists were murdered by death squads and 363 people, many detained during mass arrests, were tortured by the police and military.

How U.S. gov't stole Panamanian land to set up Canal Zone

BY DON ROJAS

(First of a series)

Panama is not just a canal. Neither did its history begin with the construction of the waterway.

Panama is a country with a rich and complex history and with vibrant cultural traditions. A history of pain and suffering under Spanish colonial oppression, Colombian neglect and indifference, and misrule by a series of corrupt oligarchies in alliance with U.S. imperialism.

It has also been a history of bitter struggles for national independence, sovereignty, and self-determination — from its many attempts

concentrated close to the canal. The canal bisects the isthmus, which connects North and South America, at its narrowest and lowest point, allowing passage between the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean.

Singular geography

Panama's singular geography, more than any other factor, has fashioned the country's political history in the 20th century.

The predominant cultural influence has been Spanish. But the country's indigenous peoples, as well as the descendants of African slaves and Caribbean peoples who migrated from the islands at the beginning of this century, have together helped shape Panama's identity and its national character.

Panamanian historian Riquarte Soler argues that a Panamanian national consciousness and a sense of being "predestined to control the crossroads of the world" was well established before the formation of the Panamanian republic in 1903.

In the second half of the 19th century, French capitalists, who had built the Suez Canal in Egypt, became interested in building a waterway across the Central American isthmus. In 1878 they obtained a concession from Colombia to build a canal under the direction of Ferdinand de Lesseps, the engineer who built the Suez Canal.

After nine years in which thousands of workers died from disease, the French Canal Co. — by then bankrupt, scandal-ridden, and technologically depleted — abandoned the project.

The French effort did not go unnoticed by the U.S. capitalist rulers. President Rutherford Hayes in 1880 and later President Theodore Roosevelt both stated that Washington wanted to build a canal under U.S. control.

They argued that it was necessary for "strategic defense" and for expansion beyond U.S. continental borders.

1898 war

As a result of the brief war with Spain in 1898, the U.S. government won absolute control of Puerto Rico and the Philippines and established a "protectorate" over Cuba.

Washington was now an imperialist power with colonies in two oceans and so both desired and needed a canal to shorten the travel time between them as well as to facilitate trade between the East and West coasts of the United States itself. Control of the canal would also place the rising imperialist power in a competitive position within world trade and commerce and bolster its military position.

The U.S. Congress had long been considering a route through Nicaragua, utilizing that country's huge lake on its western side. But, in comparison to Panama, the Nicaraguan project would have been more costly. Moreover, the country was susceptible to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

By 1903, therefore, Panama had become the more practical and feasible route. By then the U.S. rulers were determined to have "their" canal one way or another. To them, flexing of imperialist muscle against Colombia seemed perfectly logical and convenient to achieve this goal.

Panamanians excluded

No consideration was given to the views and sentiments of the proindependence forces in Panama, who were excluded from the negotiations of the Herran-Hay Treaty of 1903. This agreement granted the United States "exclusive and absolute option" to build and then operate the canal for 100 years.

Under the draft treaty, the United States agreed to pay Colombia \$10 million plus \$250,000 annually, to begin nine years after the ratification of the treaty. Meanwhile, Washington, without consulting the Colombian government, agreed to pay the bankrupt French Canal Co., which was still subject to Colombian sovereignty, \$40 million for its rights and assets. On March 17, 1903, the U.S. Senate ratified the Herran-Hay Treaty and then waited for the Colombian Congress to do the same.

The Colombian government had sought a percentage of the money Washington paid to



Recent demonstration in Panama's Los Santos Province denounces U.S. government for attempting to hold onto canal, keep bases in Panama.

the French company but failed to wrest an additional penny. Five months later the U.S. rulers were stunned by an announcement that the Colombian Congress had rejected the treaty approved by the U.S. government.

There had been heated debate in Bogotá, the Colombian capital, marked by what one historian described as "floods of antitreaty oratory that invoked national honor." The Colombian Congress responded with no fewer than nine amendments to the treaty, all aimed at clarifying and preserving Colombia's sovereignty over the isthmus, its residents, and its two port cities of Colón on the Caribbean Coast and Panama City on the Pacific.

Infuriated by Colombia's rejection, President Roosevelt railed against "those contemptible little creatures in Bogotá" who ought to understand "how much they are jeopardizing things and imperiling their own future."

Abandoning further negotiations with the Colombian government, the U.S. rulers then shifted tactics by promising the Panamanian independence forces diplomatic and military support to carry out a "revolt" against Colombia.

Panamanian independentistas

Using a crafty French engineer, Philippe Bunau-Varilla, a former representative of the French Canal Co., as an intermediary with the Panamanian independentistas, the Roosevelt administration promised that it would "guarantee" Panama's independence.

The independentistas were unable to prevent Secretary of State John Jay and Bunau-Varilla from drawing up a new treaty behind their backs and rushing it through the Senate for speedy ratification. So the infamous Panama Canal Treaty of 1903 was put together without the participation of a single Panamanian official.

In accordance with the "independence plan" worked out by Jay and Bunau-Varilla, the Panamanians would be given a flag, a declaration of independence, a constitution, and \$100,000. On Nov. 5, 1903, U.S. Marines landed in Colón while the small Colombian garrison in Panama City retreated back to Colombia. Panama became independent the day after without a shot being fired. A U.S.

army officer on hand was given "the honor" of raising the Panamanian flag over city hall. Panama was at once made and recognized by the United States.

U.S. Senate ratifies treaty

On Feb. 24, 1904, the U.S. Senate ratified the canal treaty, which allowed for interventions by the U.S. army into Panamanian territory beyond the canal zone if required to maintain "order."

For canal rights, the U.S. government paid Panama \$10 million.

The treaty also stated: "The Republic of Panama grants to the United States all the rights, power and authority within the zone . . . which the United States would possess and exercise if it were the sovereign of the territory within which said lands and waters are located to the entire exclusion of the exercise by the Republic of Panama of any such sovereign rights, power or authority."

By November Washington forced the Panamanian government to abolish its army and replace it with a weak, and at times weaponless, national police force.

Writing about the 1903 treaty, historian Wallace LaFeber noted the U.S. government's "breath-taking" powers to acquire any land or control any water "outside the Canal Zone but incident to canal uses." The zone itself is a 10-mile-wide strip across the isthmus.

Moreover, the U.S. officials controlled Panama's immigration and communications. They could intervene in Panama City and Colón, where most Panamanians lived, to enforce law and order, acquire buildings, and run sanitation.

Construction of the canal was begun in 1904 and completed in 1914. Thousands of Black workers, brought over from the Caribbean islands to carry out the back-breaking work, died from disease, malnutrition, and sheer exhaustion.

The canal was hailed as an engineering marvel of the 20th century and a triumph of U.S. technology and knowhow. It is 40.27 miles long and lifts ships 85 feet above sea level through a series of three locks on the Pacific and Atlantic sides.

The next article will examine Panama's struggle for sovereignty up to the taking of power in 1968 by Gen. Omar Torrijos.

(To be continued)

Meeting in Dublin, Ireland, views Cuban video on battle in Angola

BY BRIDGET ELTON

DUBLIN, Ireland — South Africa Freedom Day was celebrated here with a showing of the Cuban video "Response to the South African Escalation" on June 26. The video details the battle at Cuito Cuanavale, a turning point in South Africa's 13-year war against Angola. Cuban and Angolan troops dealt a decisive defeat to the apartheid army in this battle.

Thirty people attended the showing sponsored by Pathfinder Press. The national Secretary of the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement, Louise Asmal, addressed the meeting and said the video showed the strength of the Angolan people and of Cuba's role there. She stressed the need for continued worldwide solidarity and called on activists to keep up the fight for government sanctions against the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Twenty-seven dollars worth of Pathfinder

literature and two *Militant* subscriptions and seven single copies were sold at the meeting.

The video showing was one part of a five-day tour by a Pathfinder team in Ireland. On June 25 the team set up a literature table at the annual Wolfe Tone commemoration in Bodinstown, near Dublin. Tone was an 18th century leader of the Irish independence movement. Some 2,500 people participated in the commemoration and march organized by Sinn Féin.

Pathfinder books were well received, especially books on Cuba and the freedom struggle in South Africa. Sales totaled \$55 worth and 33 copies of the *Militant* were sold.

The team also visited bookshops in Dublin, Cork, and Limerick and sold more than 600 books and pamphlets. This is the first time that Pathfinder literature is available in Limerick.

PANAMA'S FIGHT FOR SOVEREIGNTY

to secede from Colombia up to its present resistance against Washington's economic domination and military aggression.

First visited by the explorer Christopher Columbus in 1502, the isthmus was the principal transshipment point for treasure and supplies to and from South and Central America during the era of Spanish colonial rule in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. During those years of wanton plunder, Panama was constantly attacked by pirates, corsairs, and buccaneers.

In the colonizers' lust for gold, mistakenly thought to exist in abundance in Panama, they slaughtered hundreds of thousands of indigenous Indians in the belief that the natives were hiding the precious metal from them.

After having virtually eliminated the Indians, the Spaniards brought in tens of thousands of African slaves to work the land between 1518 and 1820. Both the Indians and Africans mounted several revolts against the Spaniards. As a result, many Africans escaped bondage and fled to the mountains, where they set up their own kingdom and lived relatively isolated until the early 1900s.

Colombia

In 1821 when Central Americans revolted against Spanish rule, Panama joined Colombia, which already had declared its independence. For the next 82 years the country struggled unsuccessfully to end its status as a "department" of Colombia.

Anticolonial forces in Panama had been inspired by the leadership of Simón Bolívar, Latin America's most prominent fighter against colonial rule. In 1826 Bolívar convened the Congress of Panama to lay plans for a united federation of free Latin American states.

Throughout the 19th century, Colombia treated Panama as a poor and unimportant fiefdom, exploited by military officials and tax collectors sent to govern this "backward department." During this period Panama received neither the autonomy and self-government that it had sought nor the protection from foreign powers that it had been guaranteed when it voluntarily joined Colombia.

In 1841 the Panamanians declared themselves an independent "State of the Isthmus," and in 1855 they set up the "Federal State of Panama," but neither effort was sustainable, and the country fell back into its "department" status.

The southernmost of the Central American countries, Panama is roughly the size of the U.S. state of South Carolina.

It is marked with volcanic mountains in the west and rain forests in the fertile eastern region. Most of this land, however, is uninhabited, with the population of 2.5 million

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Unions set solidarity march for Pittsburgh Aug. 13

The International Association of Machinists struck Eastern Airlines March 4 in an effort to block the company's drive to break the unions and impose massive concessions on workers.

Backed by the 5,700 flight attendants and 3,200 pilots at Eastern, the strike by 8,300 Machinists

SUPPORT EASTERN STRIKERS!

has crippled the airline's operations since then. It has also won broad support from working people in the United States and Canada. Readers — especially Eastern strikers — are encouraged to send news of strike solidarity activities to this column.

Unionists and other activists from western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio will gather at the Pittsburgh Civic Arena at 12:00 noon, August 13, for a march in

support of striking Eastern workers and miners on strike at Pittston coal company.

Central labor councils from the region; United Steelworkers of America (USWA) districts 15, 20, and many locals; the Pittsburgh building trades council; United Mine Workers Region 1, and Districts 2 and 4; and the Pittsburgh chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists are among the many unions and organizations backing the action.

Some 50,000 leaflets donated by the USWA are being distributed to workers at plants and mills in the area. The steelworkers' union and the Allegheny Central Labor Council have sent letters to all local affiliates urging them to attend. The Carpenters' union is dispatching teams to each of its work sites to encourage participation.

After the march, there will be a rally at Market Square in downtown Pittsburgh at 2:00 p.m. Speakers will include mine union President Richard Trumka, Steelworkers' President Lynn Williams, and a representative of the Machinists.

More than 800 supporters cheered and applauded as 35 Eastern strikers lifted a yellow ribbon up in the air at a rally at the Kansas City International Airport July 20. "We're all here for one reason," Eastern striker Nick Angelos told the crowd. "Frank Lorenzo is a man who thought he could destroy organized labor, but instead he brought us closer together." Lorenzo is the chairman of Texas Air Corp., which owns Eastern and Continental airlines.

Some 300 delegates from the Machinists Midwest Conference were part of the rally, and newly installed IAM President George Kourpias spoke.

Machinists Local 1650, which represents workers at the Trans World Airlines overhaul base, helped organize the event, and local members turned out in force. Part of the activity was a 1.3 mile march to Terminal C to let airport passengers know that the strike is still on and going strong.

On July 12, garment workers at Polo Brothers Co., a men's apparel

manufacturer in Lawrence, Massachusetts, donated seven large boxes of food to the Eastern strikers' food bank in Boston. "Come back for help anytime," the secretary-treasurer of Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union Local 186 told the Eastern workers.

Across the street at another clothing factory, Grecio Brothers, the president of ACTWU Local 186 turned over even more food donated by union members.

Some 1,000 delegates to the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) convention, held in Boston, gave striking Eastern flight attendant Paul Cimo a standing ovation when he spoke at their gathering in mid-July.

Cimo and fellow striker Ann Gallagher held up "Stop Lorenzo" T-shirts, and the delegates roared approval of a resolution condemning Eastern's strikebreaking, and committing AFTRA to a boycott of Eastern and Continental.

A team of six flight attendants did a brisk business that day at a table with strike material. The afternoon convention session looked like a sea

of "Stop Lorenzo" T-shirts and buttons.

Nearly 100 unionists and women's rights activists came to Logan Airport in Boston July 27 for a "Women's Day" on the Eastern strikers' picket line.

The event was called to give special recognition to the 6,000 women on strike at Eastern and to celebrate women's contributions to the labor movement, explained striking Eastern flight attendant Deen Leonard. No women pilots have crossed the picket line, she said, and 87 percent of flight attendants are still out, despite five months without strike benefits. She urged strikers to have more activities like this one, which had the backing of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO and Coalition of Labor Union Women.

Striking IAM Local 1726 member Maggie Pucci and Warren Simons from Boston, Claire Fraenzl from Pittsburgh, John Connolly from New York, and Arlene Rubenstein from Kansas City, Missouri, contributed to this column.

Eastern's new flights met by strikers' protests

Continued from front page

"We know it's a battle for the unions."

Workers from at least 40 union locals participated in the action, including auto workers, public employees, farm workers, teachers, garment workers, and many others. Activists from the National Council of Senior Citizens, Latin American and Irish solidarity organizations, and a representative of the Congress of South African Trade Unions were also there.

Local IAM strike leader Tom Barker told the cheering crowd, "With your continued solidarity, we will win this strike. . . . We are asking your union locals to pick a day a month to help on the picket line." By the end of the rally, more than 30 union locals had signed up.

Several hundred workers from more than 20 unions met at the Eastern-Continental terminal at Los Angeles International Airport July 29 for a spirited, two-hour picket line.

Some 50 members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union and their families were there. Most are on strike at the La Mode factory, where they are fighting for union recognition and a contract.

The striking ILGWU members, primarily Mexicans and Central Americans, and the many other Spanish-speaking workers from other unions, led the picket line in chants of "¡Se ve, se siente, la unión está presente!" (You can see it, you can feel it, the union is present) and "¡Escuche Lorenzo! ¡Esta es la lucha!" (Listen Lorenzo, this is the struggle.) A group from the United Farm Workers was also at the picket.

An open house featuring speakers from participating unions was held at IAM Local 1932's hall after the action. The program was conducted in both English and Spanish.

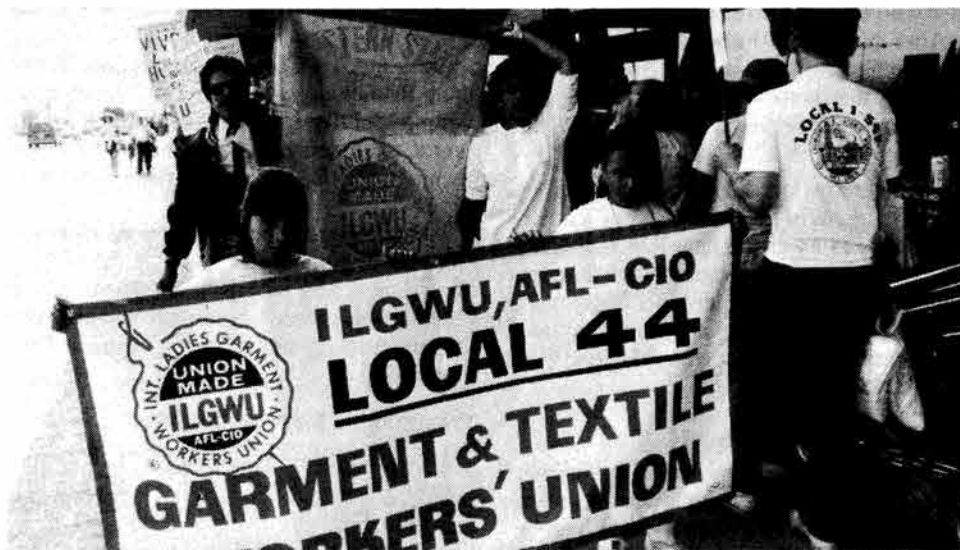
Similar picket lines to "keep the heat on Lorenzo," as the strikers' leaflet explains, are planned for every two weeks on Saturday mornings. The next is set for August 12.

The largest strike-support action to date in Birmingham, Alabama, was held July 29, when 350 unionists turned out for a rally to back both Eastern unionists and coal miners on strike at Pittston Coal Group.

Two busloads of Machinists' union members and flight attendants from Atlanta participated. Miners from several United Mine Workers of America locals and women's auxiliary members, steelworkers, and communications workers, were among the unionists present.

After the rally, the Atlanta buses drove to the airport, followed by other unionists in cars. The strikers and supporters marched through the airport, drawing a friendly response from airport workers and passengers.

On August 1, some 100 unionists, mostly Mine Workers, turned out at the Birmingham airport to picket the four flights scheduled to begin that day from Birmingham.



Los Angeles airport picket July 29 drew Eastern strike supporters from many unions

Some 150 strikers and other unionists attended a rally held at the Milwaukee airport July 30. After listening to speeches from labor officials, participants held a spirited march through the airport.

The Milwaukee County Labor Council is organizing an Eastern strike booth at the Wisconsin State Fair in early August.

More than 1,000 strikers and other union-

ists massed near Continental Airlines' mid-Manhattan ticket offices in New York July 28 for a demonstration backed by the New York Central Labor Council. Electricians, garment workers, restaurant workers, and members of other unions were part of the action, which drew considerable attention from the midday crowds.

Some 100 union members picketed the

'Daily picket lines are center of strike'

NEW YORK — "The strike is at a very important point right now," said Eastern Airlines striker Ernest Mailhot in a recent interview. "Either we keep moving forward or we'll begin to slip back." Mailhot is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1018's strike committee at New York's La Guardia Airport.

"The recent strike support demonstrations and pickets held around the country in July and again in the last few days have significantly increased the strike's visibility and given a big boost to strikers' morale," Mailhot said. "Like the leaflet from Miami's July 30 action says, these actions showed 'we can defeat Lorenzo's plan.' They showed the potential for mobilizing support from the rest of the labor movement and for keeping the strike in the public eye."

The daily picket lines, backed up by demonstrations and rallies that can mobilize broad support from the labor movement, are "the center of the strike," Mailhot stressed. "The picket line is where the strike will be won or lost — not in bankruptcy court or the offices of some financial speculator or the halls of Congress. This is an important lesson a lot of us have learned after five months on strike. It's our own actions that are decisive."

"Without keeping the picket lines strong, we won't be able to answer Lorenzo's start-up of flights, and the strike will weaken," Mailhot continued. "Other strike support activities, like the boycott of Eastern and Continental, fit into this perspective, but they can't substitute for the strikers' picket lines." Referring to a discussion going on among Eastern strikers, Mailhot emphasized, "Concentrating our energies on boycott activities at the expense of the picket lines would be a diversion from where the fight is taking place."

"It's the picket lines that have kept the airline grounded and can keep Eastern's reorganization plan from succeeding. Picketing every day has welded the Machinists, flight attendants, and pilots together. It's the daily picketing that has affected passengers and convinced many not to fly and that has persuaded many workers not to become scabs for Lorenzo," Mailhot explained. "Nothing else can do this."

Part of Eastern's start-up of flights, Mailhot explained, has been to hire subcontracting firms to do fueling, ramp work, and cleaning. Hudson General, Ogden Allied Services, and Servair are three of the companies hired by Eastern to do this work in New York, Boston, Miami, Atlanta, and other cities. In some cases, these workers are members of

the IAM. In all cases, they earn very low wages.

"We're putting out a leaflet addressed to the workers at Hudson General," Mailhot explained. "It goes over the issues in our fight and explains how a victory at Eastern will put all workers — especially other IAM workers — in a better position to defend themselves."

"Part of the leaflet says, 'Hudson General has been hired to do work for Eastern. This goes against the time-honored principle that unions do not allow the companies they organize to do work for other companies where workers are on strike. We urge you to talk to your coworkers about this and demand that your union representatives put a halt to this now. This is the only way to defend our unions both at Eastern and at Hudson General.'"

"Strikers all over the country will need to take up this question right away. We, and the whole labor movement, have to do everything possible to prevent members of our own union — or any other union, for that matter — from being used to scab on our strike. It's an IAM strike, not just an Eastern strike. Strong picket lines will help meet this challenge too," he added.

—S.L.

New Zealand moves to counter threats to banking system

Largest real estate company fails

BY RUSSELL JOHNSON

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — In early July the New Zealand government put one of the country's largest real estate developers in receivership. Business representatives supporting this move to bring the failing real estate arm of the Chase Group under statutory management argued that otherwise "the whole property market would have collapsed, taking the entire financial system with it."

In 1986 Chase was ranked the third largest company listed on the New Zealand stock exchange. Its shares peaked at more than \$11 each. They are currently changing hands at six cents. Negotiations are taking place between Chase and its more than 60 major bankers and lenders from Australia and New

Zealand to try to arrange a three-month moratorium on debt repayment.

The *New Zealand Herald* headlined the demise of Chase as "Just Another Chapter in Long Chronicle of Corporate Woe" in the wake of the October 1987 international stock market crash. In fact only four of the 20 top New Zealand companies of 1986 have so far survived the crash and the subsequent deep recession relatively unscathed. All the rest have either been placed in receivership, reported losses running into hundreds of millions of dollars, had massive fire sales of their assets to try to stay afloat, or have been taken over by stronger rivals based in New Zealand or abroad.

For example, the investment arm of NZ



Farm in Canterbury, New Zealand. Big business favored putting the real estate developers into receivership. Otherwise, they said, "the whole property market would have collapsed, taking the entire financial system with it."

Forest Products, which until 1984 was the country's largest industrial company, recorded a \$489 million loss for the year to March 1988. The company was rescued

through a takeover by Elders IXL of Australia. The Bank of New Zealand (BNZ) was left with a bad debt of \$350 million.

The biggest losers have been banks. On June 6 the BNZ reported the largest-ever loss by a New Zealand company. The total was \$633 million dollars for the year to March, and a \$1.3 billion provision for bad and doubtful debts, forcing the government to step in with a rescue plan. Less than two weeks later NZI Corp., one of the largest insurance and banking groups — for many years the flagship of New Zealand's ruling capitalist families — reported a \$320 million loss. NZI's directors are recommending acceptance of a takeover offer from the Scottish-based General Accident insurance group.

In 1984 the newly elected Labour government removed foreign exchange controls and most other state regulation of the financial system. This facilitated an unprecedented wave of speculation on the stock and real estate markets, funded by the banks. For example, between 1984 and 1986, stockmarket capitalization doubled each year.

Since the bubble burst in October 1987, this stock market value has fallen to half its precrash level, wiping out many investment and finance companies that rode the previous boom. These failures have in turn depressed the commercial real estate market in Auckland's financial district.

Chase is the sixth major Auckland commercial real estate investment company to fail this year, giving rise to the widespread fear of a collapse of property prices.

Only one major real estate-based investment company, Robt Jones Investments, Ltd., appears to have benefited in the fallout from the crash and continued to expand. In June its founder and chairman was knighted by the government.

Maryland's restrictive ballot fee overturned

BY EDWIN FRUIT

BALTIMORE — In a victory for democratic rights, a three-judge federal appeals court in Richmond, Virginia, recently ruled unconstitutional a Maryland state law requiring write-in candidates to file certificates of candidacy and pay a filing fee. Under this law a candidate would not be recognized as running for office and would not have his or her vote counted unless the filing fee was paid.

The ruling came on behalf of a suit filed in October 1987 by Reba Williams Dixon and Dana Burroughs, who ran as the Socialist Workers Party candidates for mayor and city council president in Baltimore. The suit was cosponsored by the Maryland American Civil Liberties Union. In June 1988 U.S. District Judge J. Frederick Motz upheld the state law. The appeals court overturned his decision on June 28.

Assistant State Attorney General Jack Schwartz was reported as saying that the state did not want to have to include "all the votes for Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, movie actors and sports stars, and the other stray votes. Therefore the state law helped insure that only votes for serious candidates should be reported."

The appeals court based its decision on the rights of the voter to vote for candidates of his or her choice and to have those votes counted.

Judge Harrison Winter, who wrote the unanimous decision for the Fourth Circuit, disagreed with the state's refusal to count write-in votes. "The asserted injury to the right to cast an effective vote . . . is in character, of extraordinary importance. . . . The specter of Donald Duck as successful vote-getter does not persuade us to disregard the significant violation of protected constitutional rights that we discern here."

"If the power to choose is not according to the will of the elector," he continued, "but limited to the choice of the candidates whose names are printed on an official ballot, the voter's choice is no longer free."

The court also mandated that the entire cost of counting and reporting the results of an

election is a cost that the state, not the candidate, must bear.

The decision stated that the filing fee was not justifiable "as both wealthy and poor, fraudulent or frivolous candidates can become certified and so have the votes cast for them reported. . . ."

"The refusal to report a vote because it is cast for a candidate who has not paid a filing fee . . . undermines the right to vote," the court said.

Stuart Comstock-Gay, executive director of the Maryland ACLU, said the decision was

"an endorsement of the people's right to vote for the candidates of their choice even if that candidate is not a major party candidate."

Rashaad Ali, the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate from Maryland in 1988, noted, "While this ruling was a step forward, Maryland still has one of the most restrictive ballot laws for third parties." Petitions containing 3 percent of the registered voters, amounting to thousands and thousands of signatures, must be collected and certified by the state in order to run for local, state, or federal office, he said.

Canadian Native Indian bands unite to defend rights against government

BY ANNETTE KOURI

MONTREAL — Nine chiefs representing Native Indian bands from across Canada have signed a mutual defense and support pact against "foreign powers," including the federal government and various police forces throughout the country.

The agreement ensures immediate help if the territorial integrity, political independence, or the security and other fundamental rights of one of the bands is threatened or violated, especially by police action.

The invasion of Native reservations by heavily armed federal and provincial cops has become common over the past several years as Canada's more than 1 million Native people have stepped up their struggles for recognition of their land claims, an end to racist treatment by the courts, and for forms of self-government and sovereignty.

The backdrop for the increased militancy of the Native movement has been the federal government's refusal to include Native rights in the Canadian constitution adopted by Parliament in 1981.

The pact was signed in early July at a meeting in Chibougamou, Québec, at a roadblock set up by Cree Indians to press their demands with the provincial government.

One of the initiators of the pact was Lubicon Cree Chief Bernard Ominayak. The Lubicon Cree live in northern Alberta in western Canada. Last year they drew international attention and wide support from working people when they staged a six-day blockade of 10,000 square kilometers of land to force the federal and Alberta governments to act on their decades-old land claims.

The Lubicon blockade was broken up by an armed squad of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who arrested dozens of Cree and their supporters. A settlement has still not been reached.

"Bernard Ominayak inspired us," said Bill Namagoose, chief of the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree. "Our situation is very similar to that of the Lubicon. In Alberta it's the oil companies that use the land; here, it is the forest and mining companies."

"We've seen how our Native people have

been played off against each other by the Canadian government," said Ominayak. "It's one thing to be talking about supporting one another. This is firming up that support." He explained that there is safety in numbers and that the united front would weaken federal and provincial government attempts to divide and conquer Native people.

Discussions about joining the defense pact have been held with at least 12 other bands in Canada. Ominayak said plans are under way to invite bands in the United States to join the alliance as well.

Cuba's athletes compete in Florida, rightists' provocation fails

BY MARTY ANDERSON

MIAMI — For 30 years a violent minority of South Florida's Cuban exile community has prevented many Cuban artists, athletes, doctors, and others traveling to the United States from participating in activities related to their professions.

But on Memorial Day weekend, history was made when the eight-member National Cuban Junior Weight Lifting Team participated in the international and Pan-American championships held in Ft. Lauderdale. The team was led by the vice-president of Cuba's national sports federation, Alberto Juantorena, and Cuban Interests Section official Angel Pino.

When the trip was first announced, the right-wing Cuban exile community's radio and television stations and the many tabloids raised the usual hue and cry. They called Cuban participation a provocation against them and insisted it would be prevented. However in the days leading up to the event their rhetoric became less strident.

The competition began on May 25. As always, the right-wingers in the audience were provocative. On the 26th, attacks against Pino and Juantorena increased, and physical confrontations were narrowly averted. The rightists were removed from the auditorium by the police.

On the 27th, supporters of Cuba mobilized, planning a big presence in support of the

athletes. It was organized by supporters of the Antonio Maceo Brigade and the Alliance of Workers in the Community, both Cuban-American organizations that oppose the U.S. embargo and support normalized U.S.-Cuban relations.

Nearly 100 pro-Cuba supporters were arrayed against perhaps five rightists. Every lift by Cuban weight lifter Rafael Fuentes was greeted by the chant — "Cuba va" (Go, Cuba). When Fuentes won a gold medal in the competition, 100 sang the Cuban national anthem. The athletes were moved by the support.

The day was an overwhelming success. Media coverage was extensive. Pino and Juantorena, as well as lifters Osvaldo Bongo, Ernesto "Nene" Agüero, and José Heredia were interviewed by the *Miami Herald*.

The team dominated the medals in the Pan-American competition and José Heredia won a gold medal in the international.

Radio Rebelde announced from Cuba that the participation of the team was an athletic success, but an even bigger political success. They plan to return.

Labor news in the Militant

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Rashaad Ali

Militant/Charles Ostrofsky

Gorbachev pressed by nationalism in Baltics

Soviet official: secret deal with Hitler okayed seizure of 3 countries

BY FRED FELDMAN

Under mounting pressure from nationalist sentiment in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia — three of the Soviet Union's 15 constituent republics — a top Soviet official has admitted the existence of a secret 1939 agreement with the government of Adolf Hitler in Germany that approved Moscow's seizure of the three countries. They were incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940.

"There was a secret protocol," Valentin Falin admitted July 23 on a television broadcast in West Germany. Falin heads the international department of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union's ruling Communist Party.

"The Baltic region is seething as these issues are being debated," President Mikhail Gorbachev had told a June meeting of the Soviet parliament.

"Doubt is being cast," he said, "on whether the will of the people was involved at all in the incorporation [of the Baltic states] into the Soviet Union."

Lithuania, with 3.6 million people; Latvia, with 2.6 million; and Estonia, with 1.5 million, occupy a strip of territory in the western Soviet Union, along the Baltic Sea north of Poland.

Stalin-Hitler pact

As the 50th anniversary approached of the pact signed in August 1939 between the Soviet government led by Joseph Stalin and the Nazi regime in Germany, demands were intensifying that Moscow concede that the treaty included a secret protocol on the Baltic states.

The text of the protocol had been published in capitalist countries in the late 1940s. It was based on a microfilm copy of the document that was reportedly turned over to British authorities by a former official in Hitler's government after the German imperialists were defeated in World War II.

Admitting the existence of an arrangement with Hitler concerning the Baltic states further discredits the Soviet government's claim that the Soviet military occupation and annexation resulted from "the will of the people" of the three republics.

In August 1988 the text of the protocol was published by a government newspaper in Estonia.

Following publication of this document, tens of thousands of people marched and rallied in the capital cities of the Baltic republics on August 23. They denounced the pact and demanded that Moscow admit the truth about the protocol and renounce it as a violation of the right of self-determination.

In contrast with its attitude toward previous nationalist protests in the Baltics, the government made no effort to prevent these demonstrations. Soviet historian Yuri Afanaseyev told protesters in Tallinn, Estonia, "The signing of the pact resulted in the occupation of Estonia. We are speaking of historical injustices. We have no right to be silent about it." He called for publishing the protocol, stating that the official claim that the Baltic peoples willingly adhered to the Soviet Union was "not serious."

Following the signing of the 1939 pact, the German imperialists immediately in-



vaded and occupied most of Poland, and the British and French governments responded with a declaration of war on Germany. These events marked the opening of World War II.

Policy in Baltics

The Soviet government seized eastern Poland and signed pacts with the governments of the Baltic states authorizing the construction of Soviet military bases there.

The following year, Soviet troops occupied the three countries, the governments were ousted, stacked elections were held, and the countries were annexed. Tens of thousands of people were arrested, deported, or executed.

Under bureaucratic direction and totalitarian control from Moscow, the overturn of capitalist rule and property relations was carried out. Many forms of expression of nationalist feeling — including displaying the flags of the former independent states — were banned.

In June 1941 Hitler's forces invaded the Soviet Union and quickly overran much of the Baltic region. They slaughtered at least 280,000 Jews, as well as other residents. In 1944 Soviet troops reentered the area as the German army retreated.

As Stalin reasserted control, thousands of people from the three countries were deported to other parts of the Soviet Union, including Baltic peasants charged with opposing forced collectivization of agriculture.

Many people from other parts of the Soviet Union migrated to Estonia and Latvia. Today, 40 percent of Estonia's population originated elsewhere in the Soviet Union, more than 50

percent of Latvia's, and some 20 percent of Lithuania's.

As the official language of the Soviet Union, Russian became the language of government in the Baltic republics as well.

Today, nationalist formations, including the Estonian Popular Front, Latvian Popular Front, and Sajudis in Lithuania, are pressing for extensive economic and political autonomy. They appear to have a significant degree of backing for this within the governing Communist parties of the three republics.

In Estonia, for example, 22 percent of the delegates to the October 1988 congress of the Popular Front were members of the party, as were a majority of those elected to lead the front.

Nationalists and perestroika

The emergence of national movements in the Baltic states and among other non-Russian peoples in the Soviet Union are among the consequences of the deepening social and economic crisis that is shaking the Soviet Union as a whole.

In Estonia, the main activists, according to the Oct. 17, 1988, *Washington Post*, "are not workers or radical students but middle-class professionals."

Like the current regimes in the three republics, the leaders of the nationalist currents are supporters of *perestroika*, Gorbachev's proposals for restructuring the Soviet economy.

Perestroika involves relying heavily on capitalist market mechanisms, trade and investment from capitalist countries, and expanded leeway for the establishment of capitalist enterprises, to overcome stagnating labor productivity and other problems.

Last October, the Estonian Popular Front called for the "unimpeded development of cooperative, personal, and private property," urging that some state enterprises be turned over to cooperatives or individuals.

Nationalist sentiments rooted in oppression by the Moscow regime are also fueled by resentment of the use of resources from the Baltic region in other parts of the Soviet Union. The Baltic countries are more developed in some areas of industrial production, such as consumer goods, than most of the rest of the country.

Many nationalists in the Baltic countries also seek to restrict migration to the Baltics of people from other parts of the Soviet Union. This reflects the widely held belief that this migration has been used by Moscow to reinforce national oppression of the Baltic peoples.

The governments of the republics have made extensive concessions to the nationalists.

The display of the national flags is now permitted, and in Estonia the national flag

has replaced the Soviet one over public buildings. Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian have been proclaimed official languages.

The legislatures of all three countries have adopted amendments to the republic constitutions proclaiming their right to reject laws enacted by Moscow.

On May 18 the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian soviet republic proclaimed its right to administer the republic's budget and asserted sole control of the republic's industry and natural resources. The legislature also voted to condemn the 1939 pact.

The Estonian government has proposed an economic program that includes replacing collectivization with private ownership of farms and Estonian government control of migration from the rest of the Soviet Union.

Five days later, Lithuania's legislature declared that residents of the republic would not have to pay a nationwide highway tax.

Gorbachev yields ground

On May 14 leaders of Sajudis, the Estonian Popular Front, and the Latvian Popular Front appealed to the United Nations "to heed the aspiration of our nations for self-determination and independence in a neutral and demilitarized zone of Europe."

In the elections to the Congress of People's Deputies held in March, candidates demanding greater autonomy or even outright independence for the Baltic republics won many seats.

The governments in the Baltic states and the main nationalist organizations there are Gorbachev's allies in the effort to implement *perestroika*, but concessions to their demands for autonomy can inspire other oppressed nationalities to step up their struggles.

To attempt to forcibly crush the nationalist ferment in the Baltics, however, would be extremely costly for the Gorbachev regime. It would worsen the prospects for improved diplomatic relations and expanded economic ties with the United States and countries in Western Europe, whose governments have never diplomatically accepted the Soviet annexation of the Baltic states.

Under these circumstances, Gorbachev is taking the course of yielding to many of the demands for autonomy.

On July 27 the Supreme Soviet gave approval in principle to laws adopted by the republic parliaments in Estonia and Lithuania. The legislation asserted their control over the foreign trade of the republics, as well as budgets, tax policies, prices, and financial markets. The Supreme Soviet also agreed in principle to exempt the Baltic republics from nationwide laws that contradicted the economic plans set by the republic governments.

"It opens the road for us to begin realizing our program of independence," said Mikhail Bronshtein, an Estonian who led the fight for the measure in the Soviet legislature.

How 1917 revolution granted Baltic countries independence

From Stalin's time to the present, the government of the Soviet Union has been an obstacle to the aspirations of the Baltic peoples for the right of self-determination. But this was not so prior to the rise to power of the bureaucratic caste that Stalin headed and Gorbachev heads today.

The three countries owed their national independence, which Stalin's regime crushed, to the October 1917 revolution that established a workers' and peasants' government in the former tsarist empire.

The revolution was led by the communist Bolshevik Party. Headed by V.I. Lenin, the Bolshevik Party advocated and fought for the right of self-determination for all the nationalities oppressed by tsarism.

The oppression of these nationalities and the privileged position assigned to the Great Russians was a pillar of the tsarist monarchy and bureaucracy, and of the landlord and capitalist exploiters that they represented.

Supporting the struggles of these peoples for self-determination helped unify workers and peasants of all nationalities

for the struggle against the capitalists and landlords, and helped win the best working-class and poor peasant fighters of the oppressed nationalities to the Bolshevik Party.

As part of a course aimed at unifying working people through the elimination of every trace of national oppression, the Bolshevik-led government granted independence to Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Finland, even though all of these countries had capitalist governments.

After the death of Lenin in 1924, a bureaucratic caste headed by Stalin came to power, crushing the resistance of those in the Bolshevik Party who fought to remain on a working-class and communist course. This privileged layer systematically reinforced the privileged position of the great Russian nationality and the oppression of non-Great Russian nationalities.

Protests against Great Russian chauvinism and discrimination were brutally repressed, and the right to self-determination that had been won through the revolution was effectively stamped out.

British Airways Machinists hit by sweeping federal court injunction

BY JON HILLSON

NEW YORK — Machinists union members at British Airways have been slapped with a sweeping injunction that bars activity aimed at breaking an impasse in negotiations with the company.

The June 30 federal court order was sought by the airline after International Association of Machinists Local 2656 stepped up activity aimed at winning a contract settlement. The local represents 500 British Airways workers in the New York area.

The union's contract with the airline — the largest foreign-owned carrier operating in the United States — expired more than two years ago. British Airways has made concession demands the center of its "offer" to the local, which represents ticket agents, reservation clerks, ramp workers, baggage

handlers, and other airline personnel. A smaller IAM local is also involved in the bargaining.

The court order forbids the unionists from engaging in "any work stoppage, strike, slowdown, sick-out, or picketing," or from "otherwise refusing to perform work." In May and June the unionists had organized on-the-job protests and informational picketing.

Local 2656 members, many of whom have joined the Eastern strikers' picket lines, were "outraged" by the court order, said local Vice-president Maureen Holder. They were stunned that the court "could interpret the law the way it did," she said. "It seemed obvious the law was on our side," Holder added, referring to the Railway Labor Act, which governs airlines. The order violates workers' constitutional right to freedom of assembly, Holder stressed.

'We will transform this setback into a victory'

Fidel Castro's July 9 speech to Council of State on Ochoa case

The following speech by Cuban President Fidel Castro was presented to the Council of State in Havana on July 9. The speech was broadcast on national television in Cuba two days later. The translation from Spanish is from the July 23 issue of the English-language edition of *Granma Weekly Review*, published by the Cuban Communist Party.

Comrades of the Council of State:

We are in the presence of an exceptional situation that necessarily calls for the Council of State to make a very important decision. Realizing that this would have to be so, during the unfolding of the trial, particularly in its last stage, I came to the conclusion that it was necessary that, in order to make this historical decision, all the members of the Council of State be present.

That is why we made special arrangements to try to have Comrade [Juan] Almeida and Comrade [Roberto] Robaina, who were in Pyongyang, travel to Cuba urgently and make it possible for them to attend the Council of State meeting. Comrade [José Ramón] Fernández had been designated to attend the inauguration of the new Argentine president and we decided to make a change, replacing him with another comrade. And so all the members of the Council of State are here.

I will necessarily have to speak at length to refer to certain early facts, to recount all that has happened, to express my viewpoints, as you all have just done, and also perhaps contribute some elements on the case that may help us make the final decision.

I consider that this process has been characterized by exceptional honesty. I believe it would not be an exaggeration to say that never before has there been a trial with so much participation, with so much information, so much clearheadedness and so much fairness. I believe that never before in a process of this nature have so many people expressed themselves, and it's possible that never before has there been such a crystal clear one. I think I should say a few words about this.

This has been a summary trial, but the measures adopted so that the trial be carried out with full objectivity and in all fairness have also been exceptional.

I must say that although it involved a Special Military Court, and military matters are noted for their discipline, absolute respect for the opinions of the court and every one of its members prevailed at all times.

I was in contact with the prosecutor often and I kept in contact with the court throughout the trial, but not the slightest influence was exerted on the decision to be taken by it at the end. And once the hearing finished I asked the court for its points of view. I never mentioned what I thought out of respect for those comrades, very worthy, serious, responsible comrades all of them.

To me, the fundamental thing was knowing what they thought of all they had been able to appreciate and perceive throughout the trial. They made their decision with absolute freedom.

Logically, we could have influenced the prosecutor, his views, because the prosecutor is the representative of the state who must watch over abidance by the law. That's his mission, while the mission of the court was to judge and decide.

The court took the prosecutor's requests into consideration, but it decided in an absolutely free manner what kind of sentence to pass on the basis of the seriousness of the case. It was the court that decided to reduce the number of death penalties petitioned by the prosecutor. It was the court that decided to increase the sentence for one of the defendants, Miguel Ruiz [Poo], from 25 years to 30. It was the court that decided to reduce the 15 years requested by the prosecutor for another defendant to 10 years.

This viewpoint prevailed throughout the trial. At no time was any influence brought to bear on the investigators' opinions or on the witnesses or the defendants.

So the trial was characterized by really exceptional honesty.

The same thing happened, as you know, when we exchanged opinions in the Political Bureau, the Central Committee, the Executive Committee, the Council of

Ministers, and I said that the last decision would be taken by the Council of State, regardless of the opinions of the members of the Political Bureau or the Central Committee. The Council of State would exercise its constitutional prerogatives in making a final decision if the Supreme Court sentence, in case death penalties were involved, reached its jurisdiction.

It was very clear that the decision as to what was to be done would not depend on the Political Bureau or the Central Committee or the Council of Ministers, and that the Council of State would, in an absolutely free manner, exercise its prerogatives.

You are exceptional witnesses to the fact that no one has approached a single member of this Council of State, that I haven't spoken to any of you about your viewpoints, nor has Comrade Raúl [Castro], or any other vice-president. Nothing was discussed about the contents of the decision that in an absolutely free manner was to be made by you in today's meeting.

Not all the members of the Council of State are members of the Political Bureau, and those of you who are knew, too, that you were absolutely free to make your decision. Not all of you are members of the Central Committee. Several comrades here are members of the Council of State but not of the Central Committee. None was approached to give their opinion, none was asked their views beforehand. Thus we have respected, down to the last detail, the principles of fairness and justice. This is how you have expressed your opinions here today.

It was also our idea that if everything has been made public — the Court of Honor sessions, the trial hearings — everything expressed by each one of us here should also be made public so that the people could see how this meeting of the Council of State unfolded.

I think this will be an exceptional opportunity for the people to hear all the viewpoints, arguments, and criteria of the members of the Council of State, although there is another question we raised repeatedly throughout this trial,

“A leader cannot just think about today, he must think about what is best for our country, people, revolution in the long term . . .”

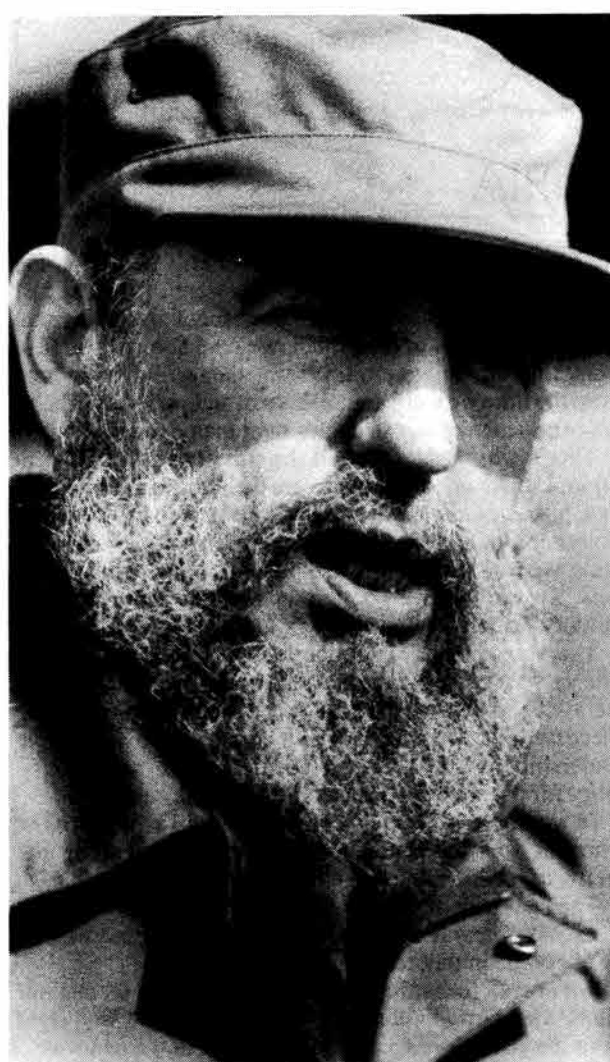
and it is that the decision adopted here was not going to be determined by public opinion or public surveys. It could be that an overwhelming majority of the population had one opinion and we would be compelled to adopt another opinion.

Comrade Carlos Rafael [Rodríguez] spoke about this this afternoon here, concerning the responsibilities of leaders, because a leader cannot just think about today or the immediate future, he must think about what is best for our country, our people, our revolution, not just today or tomorrow but in 10 years, 50 years, 100 years. Were the problem to be solved by surveys, there would be no need for a Council of State meeting or decision.

We know the opinion of the people, we know what the people think, but I am duty-bound to say here that to us, under the present circumstances, that wouldn't be a decisive factor. It's better for there to be agreement between what the people think and what we think, but what may not necessarily exist is the need to do what public opinion asks for, or what public opinion thinks, inasmuch as we are duty-bound to judge these events with presence of mind, very calmly, with great reflection and cool heads.

I believe I am pretty well informed about the events that occurred. As Raúl explained here, at MINFAR [Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces] alone I worked for 150 hours since the people mainly responsible for these events were arrested.

I have a lot of information on everything that was said
Continued on next page



Fidel Castro

Militant/Selva Nebbia

Continued from previous page

at the Court of Honor and the trial hearings, on everything that was made public, and a lot was made public. Just a few things were not made public because they are unpleasant, they have to do with moral questions that may affect innocent people or that are too scandalous, so we decided not to make those things public.

There were also some mistakes, particularly in Ochoa's case, violations of certain revolutionary principles, mistakes in the international sphere, that could cause damage to our country's foreign policy and that were analyzed at the Court of Honor and the hearings. These weren't made public because they could have led to more problems, more difficulties and, in the final analysis, they weren't decisive factors bearing on the decisions that had to be taken.

There are some questions here of extreme importance, that have to do with the history of the revolution, the struggle of the revolution, the spirit behind the revolution's internationalist missions, that have not been made public because, logically, the comrades wanted to be brief. That

Forces, I repeat, exercise and have always exercised those powers.

The lives of the sons and daughters of our people, the lives of our fighters are so important that their maximum protection in case of war may not be placed in any one person's hands. Such a high responsibility corresponds to the leadership of the party and the High Command of the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

Minimum of sacrifices

There have been brilliant generals in the world who have won battles at the expense of many lives, at the expense of the sacrifice of many men. I think that one characteristic of our revolution, since the Sierra Maestra times, was having achieved big successes and won big victories, not in the fashion of those famous generals but with a minimum of sacrifices, with a minimum of losses.

One of those generals might say: I win such and such a battle of such and such a type at the expense of so many thousands of lives. That was never the doctrine, the philosophy, nor the thinking of the revolution, nor the think-

file soldiers, our tank crews, our artillerymen, antiaircraft defense troops, explorers, construction battalions who also performed feats. We are exceptional witnesses to all those efforts, all those merits, because we spent, just like now, most of the time at the General Staff, countless hours at work for the close to a year that this last stage of the war in Angola lasted and that ended in victory.

“Our country staked everything in the Angola war...”

That's why it's impossible not to analyze this aspect in a case like this. Under what circumstances did the events leading up to the trial take place? They took place while a war raged on, in the midst of a war of enormous importance where we can say that our country staked everything by sending its best weapons and over 50,000 men there.

If we want to have an idea of what 50,000 men are for a tiny country like Cuba, multiply them by 24, which is the number of times that the population of the United States exceeds ours. It's as if the United States had sent 1.2 million men to a theater of operations. Or as if the USSR had sent 1.4 million men — the USSR's population is 28 times greater than Cuba's. And our small country which had a military mission in Ethiopia and has another military mission in the Congo, although smaller, which has to defend itself against a powerful enemy, was capable of sending 50,000 men to a territory further away than Moscow. You shouldn't look at a map but rather judge by the number of flying hours between Cuba and Angola.

See how far our revolution went to fulfill a combat mission, with its internationalist spirit, its combat morale, its ability to mobilize; how it was capable, I repeat, of making such an effort.

And this last effort we made exclusively with our own means, just like when our internationalist mission in Angola started. It was our ships that carried the men and the matériel over there; and on this last occasion we did it alone, with our ships and our air power, which we sent over as reinforcements — the men and the matériel needed to settle the problem that arose there.

It was precisely when we were carrying out that big feat, Cuba's greatest internationalist effort so far, that these shameful and despicable events took place.

I asked the General Staff comrades to compile a file for me of the coded radio messages sent to Angola during that period, the critical period. And, of course, they gave me over 100 messages that I had sent to Ochoa. I wanted to go over all that material in order to recall what went on there at every moment and contrast it with everything that they were doing there concerning the problem brought to trial in these past days.

Ochoa was appointed chief of the military mission in Angola in the first days of November 1987. Everybody knows that Comrade Polo [Gen. Leopoldo Cintra Frias] — I call him by his nickname — had spent many years in Angola. When the situation began to get complicated, the comrades in the High Command thought it would have been inconsiderate, an abuse, to send Polo to Angola again, so they decided to send Ochoa instead. The situation wasn't as critical, it was getting worse but it wasn't yet as critical.

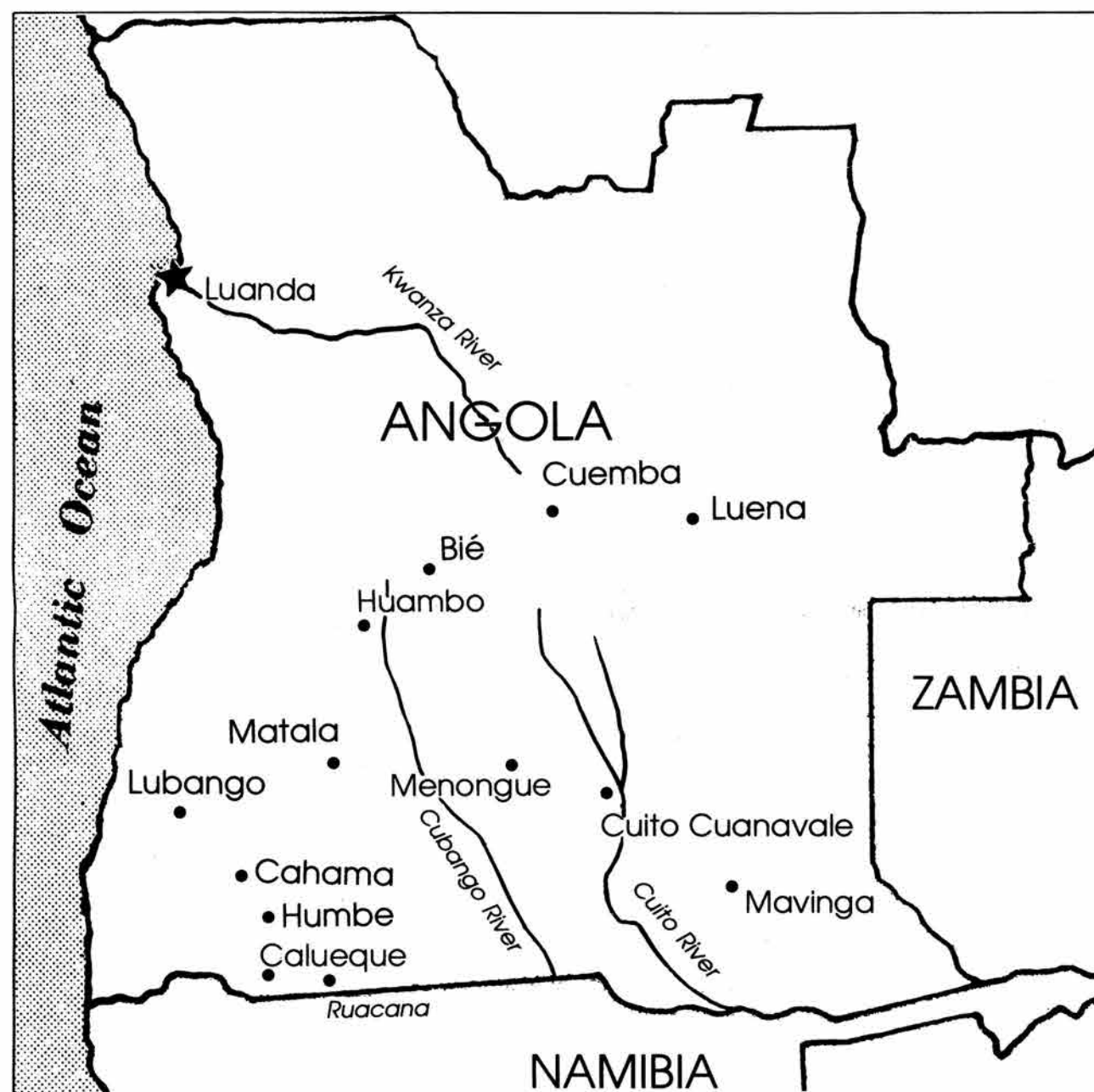
I was in the USSR at the time attending the 70th anniversary — the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution was November 7 that year — and returned two or three days later, and it was between the 7th and the 15th of that month that the situation became very much worse due to South Africa's escalation and the danger of their destroying or wiping out the biggest and best group of Angolan troops deployed in Cuito Cuanavale. At that point we decided to reinforce the air power in Angola with our best pilots and on Nov. 15, 1987, we took the decision to reinforce the troops.

Everybody was asking us to help save that situation which was very critical, everybody was asking us to do something. We ourselves realized that in spite of the fact that we weren't responsible for the mistakes that led to that situation, we couldn't cross our arms and let a military and political catastrophe take place in Angola as a result of a brutal foreign aggression.

Best man for job was not Ochoa

That was why on Nov. 15, 1987, we took the decision to reinforce our troops in Angola and adopt necessary measures to confront the crisis. By then Ochoa was head of the mission. But we realized that the best man for that job was not Ochoa, because of his character, his lack of familiarity with the Angolans, his scant relations with them.

We then found what in my opinion was a very correct solution. Replacing Ochoa with Polo would have been perhaps humiliating for the former, perhaps it would have seemed as if we were underestimating his qualities or his abilities. So what we decided to do was to send Polo as chief of the Southern Front where the bulk of our forces was to be deployed, where the fighting was going on, and



was necessary because we don't have all that much time available.

One of them is the following: What could our population have thought, that we ask thousands of our soldiers, tens of thousands of our soldiers to fulfill an internationalist mission and place them under the command of an irresponsible chief, under the command of an uncontrollable chief, under the command of a chief who is capable of embarking on any kind of adventure?

I think it is very important to clear this up because even on this count the offenses committed here could damage the trust of our people in the leadership of the party and the leadership of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. This is not the case nor can it be so. We need military chiefs in every unit and heads of missions, but I must explain that in the fulfillment of these internationalist tasks it is impossible, it is inconceivable to allow any military chief, however bright or capable, to have the power to make strategic decisions during the fulfillment of those missions and, on many occasions, the power to make important tactical decisions.

Even if the man was Clausewitz, the famous theoretician of military strategy, or Bonaparte, the famous warrior who was said to be very capable in his time and age, our party and our Revolutionary Armed Forces may not delegate their powers to such chiefs; they exercise those powers and have always done so in full in every one of such important internationalist missions where the lives of thousands of men have been at stake. The leadership of the party and the High Command of the Revolutionary Armed

ing of any one of us, because we weren't trained in the academies nor anything like it. We weren't trained just reading history books nor reading about strategies and tactics, regardless of how much we read about those subjects. Instead we were trained together with our fighters from the time we were a small bunch, and we lived through the experience of our struggles over many years.

That's why I state that all the missions in Angola, in Ethiopia, and anywhere else were the responsibility, in the first place, of the leadership of the party and the High Command of our Revolutionary Armed Forces. If anything went wrong, it was our responsibility, completely ours, and we weren't going to blame it on any chief, any military leader. That was so and it couldn't be otherwise.

There's a tendency in the world to individualize success. The very successes of the revolution are often attributed to me — Castro's successes — when they're actually the successes of our whole people, the successes of our whole leadership. I would prefer to take the blame, the responsibility for the setbacks instead of for the successes.

In war there is also the tendency to praise the merits of whoever was in command, while often neglecting the merits of the men, the sergeants, lieutenants, captains.

The last stage of the war in Angola was really a big feat, an extraordinary feat and we know full well the merits won by everyone in that feat.

We are not forgetting, for instance, not for a second our pilots who carried out thousands of sorties and who right from the start played a decisive role in Cuito Cuanavale.

We are not forgetting our sappers who planted tens upon tens of thousands of mines or cleared them, our rank-and-

where the main operations would be conducted. We left Ochoa as chief of the mission and assigned the task of commanding the Southern Front to Comrade Polo. This is very important.

So we also established coded radio communications directly with the Southern Front to be able to receive information and to send the High Command's instructions directly to the Southern Front, from where headquarters reported to us in detail everything that was happening.

This was face-saving: the cabled instructions went to the chief of the mission and later on cables were sent to the chief of the mission and to the chief of the Southern Front. At first the cables went out to Ochoa, but later they went to Ochoa and Polo.

I consider it very important that the members of the Council of State know this — well, you already know — but, above all, that our people know this, how these missions were carried out.

I looked over each message carefully, because I wanted to see how the level of corruption that we now know Ochoa had fallen prey to, how his level of moral decay could have influenced his behavior. The fact is that when he went

“**I looked over messages carefully to see how his level of moral decay could have influenced his behavior in Angola . . .**”

over, as has now been shown, he carried with him the idea of drug trafficking — by then [Jorge] Martínez had already made a series of contacts and was making arrangements to get his Colombian passport with Ochoa's knowledge. I sincerely believe that all these factors were already influencing Ochoa's conduct.

On reviewing the material I saw that it had been necessary to formulate quite a few criticisms while he was on the mission. Of course, there will always be criticism of any commander, that is indispensable. There will always be problems and it will always be necessary to analyze and say this wasn't done well, that should have been done this way. There will always be faults for a General Staff to complain about.

Well, I have been going over those messages which I don't want to discuss at length because it's not a matter of telling a story but rather of seeing what was going on then and of considering the importance of the events, the gravity of what was happening elsewhere.

Lazy about reports

It was a known fact that on other missions Ochoa was not inclined to send reports; he was lazy in writing reports, and on each of his missions there were complaints that he was not very much inclined to sit down and dictate appropriate reports.

On December 2, when he had been in Angola for just three weeks, in one of the dispatches which I sent him — and I will only read a few paragraphs from some, which have a lot of material, I have a lot here, but I will only list the main things, to facilitate an understanding of the issue — I said, “I asked if you had sent any information about the instructions of the 30th and they tell me nothing has come in and that you don't send much information. I hope this habit doesn't prevail this time.” I said that on December 2.

There is another thing: although Ochoa's role was not leading the troops in the south, where the bulk of our men and matériel was concentrated, Ochoa had a very important role because he was in Luanda. The war was being carried out by two armies: the Angolan and the Cuban. Many things had to be coordinated with the Angolans and many problems had to be solved there.

There was an operational control center where there were Soviet advisers, Cubans, and Angolans. As is evident and can happen under any circumstances, we were not always in agreement with the decisions reached at the center. Ochoa had to be there.

One day in the midst of the crisis, we received news of agreements reached at the center, when the situation in Cuito Cuanavale was critical. The agreements had to do with the movement of certain units which were taken out of Cuito and Menongue because of a new situation in the central part of the country due to maneuvers by UNITA with the help of South African advisers.

In the dispatch of Dec. 20, 1987, there is a paragraph which says, “We are very annoyed by the unexpected ideas which are inexplicable and run counter to our views about the struggle in the south against South Africa, which is the main way to solve the problems created in Angola.”

On the 21st I sent another long message — I think the rest of the material should be used when it comes time to write the history of this problem, but the time for that has not yet come. There is a paragraph in which I said, “We still don't understand why you were not present at the meeting in the center as is evident from your dispatch,”

since important decisions had been made and apparently he wasn't there. That was on Dec. 21, 1987.

The situation in Cuito was still complicated. Our planes were in action daily and then the theory developed — it was Ochoa's theory — that the South Africans were withdrawing and there was no longer a crisis and we could undertake certain troop movements in another direction. That was on Jan. 12, 1988.

Ochoa's strategic proposals rejected

On that occasion we rejected Ochoa's first strategic proposal. I must point out that during the time he was head of the mission he presented four strategic proposals and all four were turned down. The General Staff have the maps, drawings, and arrows indicating what he proposed, and all four proposals presented at different times were turned down by the General Staff.

The four different strategic proposals which were all rejected were: one regarding Cuito, another regarding the center, another with regards to the advance to the south, and another regarding the final stage. As head of the mission he had to present the proposals, but we rejected all four.

That was the first, and in a paragraph from a message sent on Jan. 12, 1988, I told him, “The situation in Cuito Cuanavale is still unresolved in spite of the optimistic indications you have reported.” Then I said, “If the 58th and 10th brigades [Angolan] are sent from Menongue to Kwanza, there won't be any Cubans left in Menongue to fight their way to Cuito in case the 8th Brigade runs into serious trouble in its supply role. Until South African intentions are clear, the 58th and 10th shouldn't be moved.”

Elsewhere we said, “We can't move the tactical group to Cuemba because that would oblige us to place another tactical group at the bridge crossing and a third in Bié. None would be left in Huambo. We would be jeopardizing the troops in the south in two directions, apart from the measures to be taken in Luena” — there was also a difficult situation in Luena — “which would be worse if we were to move the two FAPLA [People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola] brigades from Menongue. We must be very careful to prevent anything that would upset what we have accomplished in the south.”

Of course there were other instructions as well.

That was on the 12th. And do you know what happened on the 13th? — the 13th or 14th, we'd have to check that — a strong South African attack east of the river along a very wide front defended by three Angolan brigades: the 21st, 59th and 25th, with five kilometers between each.

I must point out that when the crisis began there wasn't a single Cuban fighter in Cuito. First of all we sent advisers, technical personnel for artillery, tanks and other weapons to help the Angolans use the equipment. We still hadn't sent any troops. This was a very serious problem because there were 200 kilometers of jungle between Menongue, where the Cubans were stationed, and Cuito Cuanavale, to the east.

The enemy attacked and dislodged the 21st Brigade and threatened the positions of the other two, so on the 14th we decided to send a tactical group with a battalion of tanks,

artillery, and other weapons, across the 200 kilometers until they reached Cuito Cuanavale.

This was done and on the 17th I sent Ochoa another dispatch which said:

“Here are some ideas about the defense of Cuito which you should analyze and try to apply as we propose or with the modifications you may suggest.

“With the reinforcement of the tactical group and the 10th Brigade” — an Angolan brigade that advanced with our tactical group from Menongue to Cuito — “we are not planning to cross the Cuito River to the east. The defense perimeter east of the river should be reduced by pulling back the 59th and 25th brigades towards positions that are well fortified and closer to the river. These two brigades should cover the east so that the 8th Brigade can resume its mission of supplying food.” The 8th Brigade is Angolan.

“The current positions of the 59th and 25th brigades are very risky,” we told him on January 17, “since they are exposed to the possibility of a breakthrough in the area where the 21st Brigade was located. We can't continue running those risks.”

This was on January 17, which marked the start of what we could call our battle to readjust the lines east of the river. Cuito Cuanavale, the real Cuito, is a small town to the west, but there were a number of Angolan brigades to the east of the river that depended on a brigade under constant enemy attack with long-range artillery. From the 17th we started to struggle to modify those lines.

I should make it clear that when we sent the tactical group, we asked the Angolans — this was supposed to be done via the Angolan General Staff — for permission to take charge of the defense of Cuito. Our planes were already playing a key role, we had already sent the tactical group by land and our forces were engaged in the battle, so we asked for the responsibility. The mission was given instructions and it reported back that we were already responsible for the defense of Cuito.

‘Who's in charge?’

On Jan. 26, 1988, Ochoa was sent another dispatch — these were sent almost every day and what I have here is a selection — and there is a part which says, “I don't understand what's going on in Cuito.

“Who's in charge in Cuito?”

“Very often you don't even take the trouble of explaining the reasons for what is being done, even though we are not inflexible in our views and we're always willing to listen to what you have to say.”

By the 26th we still didn't have any response to our instructions of the 17th and it really made us despair.

It was decided that Ochoa would come to Cuba. He arrived on January 31. We summoned him to discuss the situation in Cuito in detail and what had to be done there. He left for Angola on February 4 and arrived on the 5th. His task was to overcome any resistance, if there should be any from our Angolan allies or the Soviet advisers, to a readjustment of the defense lines. He arrived on the 5th and days passed and the lines were not being readjusted.

Meanwhile, we sent more men and matériel to Cuito
Continued on next page

Chronology of Arnaldo Ochoa Case

June 12	Division Gen. Arnaldo Ochoa arrested, along with Col. Antonio de la Guardia and five other high-ranking members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) and of the Ministry of the Interior (MININT) on charges of illegal trade and currency operations and other activities in Angola. Also arrested on related charges were Diocles Torralbas, minister of transportation and vice-president of the Council of Ministers; and Idalberto Gálvez Richardson, a functionary of Publicitur, the Cuban tourism agency.	major portions of legal proceedings continue to be broadcast through court-martial and Council of State meeting.
June 28		National Assembly expels Ochoa.
June 29		Central Committee expels Ochoa, Torralbas from Communist Party of Cuba. Division Gen. José Abrantes Fernández dismissed as interior minister, replaced by Gen. Abelardo Colomé Ibarra.
June 30–July 4		Court-martial in session.
July 3		<i>Granma</i> editorial — “Not even a single stone in the trenches of Cuba's morale and honor can be left without repair.”
July 7		Military court sentences defendants.
July 9		Supreme Military Tribunal and Supreme People's Tribunal both confirm sentences. Council of State meets, rejects appeal to commute death sentences.
July 10		TV broadcast of Council of State proceedings except for Fidel Castro's speech.
July 11		TV broadcast of Fidel Castro's July 9 speech to Council of State.
July 13		Ochoa, Capt. Jorge Martínez, Antonio de la Guardia, and Maj. Amado Padrón executed.
July 14		Announcement of dismissals of seven top MININT officials.
July 24		Torralbas sentenced to 20 years.
June 13	Proof of drug trafficking operations by both Ochoa and de la Guardia uncovered in course of investigation.	
June 14	<i>Granma</i> announces arrest of Ochoa, dismissal of Torralbas. FAR Minister Raúl Castro addresses 28th anniversary of Western Army; broadcast live on Cuban TV.	
June 15	Further arrests.	
June 16	<i>Granma</i> editorial — “A genuine revolution will never tolerate impunity.”	
June 22	<i>Granma</i> editorial — “We will take exemplary measures to eradicate outrages such as this.”	
June 25–26	Court of Honor: Ochoa stripped of rank and medals, expelled from armed forces.	
June 27	Cuban TV begins broadcasting extensive excerpts of Court of Honor proceedings;	

Continued from previous page
Cuanavale to ensure the position.

From this point we were almost able to guess what was going to happen. On January 12 we were saying that the danger hadn't passed and on February 14 came the big South African attack, while our mission was still saying that the South Africans had pulled back.

Now it was the same thing all over again: Ochoa had returned to Angola on February 5 with precise instructions to secure a readjustment of the lines east of the river, the line that was 18 kilometers east, almost out of range of our artillery which was to the west, with five kilometers between each brigade. Nearly a month had passed, nearly a month, and the lines still hadn't been readjusted.

He had left Cuba on the 4th and arrived in Luanda on the 5th with the assignment of solving the problem, and what happened? On February 14 — St. Valentine's Day — the South Africans launched a big attack, this time on the 59th Brigade, and broke through its lines, or rather they advanced along the five-kilometer gap between the 21st and 59th Brigades. They started to surround the 59th, giving rise to a very difficult situation. They could have reached the bridge and completely surrounded all three Angolan brigades. This was only prevented by a desperate counterattack of an Angolan-Cuban tank company.

Cuban losses

The enemy used more than 100 vehicles and the strong counterattack by the Angolan-Cuban force further back, near the bridge, stopped the enemy. But virtually all seven tanks were lost, only one was saved, and 14 Cubans were killed, although of course this was not in vain for a disaster was averted and time was gained for the Angolan 59th, 25th, and 21st brigades to regroup.

On the 15th we sent Ochoa a message: "We are awaiting news and more precise data about what happened on the 14th east of Cuito. Report Cuban losses and, if possible, those of the Angolans in the three brigades that pulled back, possible losses in equipment, artillery, etc."

Then I added: "After the mistake made and the time that was lost in adjusting the defense of Cuito, it is necessary to keep a cool head."

"You have always underestimated possible enemy action. We must be more alert and aware in order to avoid surprises and mistakes."

"I must frankly say that here we feel bitter over what happened because it was repeatedly anticipated and warned about."

For nearly a month we had been stressing the need to readjust the lines, but of course what happened necessarily led to this being done.

On the 20th I sent another message to him asking: "There has been no answer to two important questions: How many tanks can operate east of the river? How many Angolan tanks in good shape are there to the west?"

"I am asking this because we are considering the dispatch of reinforcements to the east with some Angolan tanks left west of the river so that the small reserve force in the east will have at least 10 or 12 tanks."

"You must keep in mind the dangers of the situation east of the river."

"If the enemy is able to break through our defenses, the

Angolan forces will have their backs to the river and might suffer heavy losses including those drowned, killed, or captured and it would be a total disaster. Should that happen, it would be hard to hold Cuito and the political and moral consequences for FAPLA and the Angolan government would be terrible."

Around that time the enemy planes were able to destroy the bridge which had already been seriously damaged by their artillery using pilotless planes, drones.

On February 21st another message was sent which said: "We really fail to understand the slow pace of action in Cuito Cuanavale. A whole week has passed since the events on February 14 and so far only two battalions of the 21st Brigade have crossed to the west of the river. According to our estimates, there are still about 3,500 Angolan soldiers and a lot of equipment that should have been taken west. Worst of all, the news received today is that the bridge is totally useless with several different sections destroyed and it is almost totally impossible to get across."

"There is also a report that tomorrow, Monday, three bundles of rope will be sent to Cuito."

"What would happen if tomorrow the enemy breaks through the line with a powerful attack in the direction of the river?"

"A great many days have been lost. We don't understand how our instructions or even our views are transmitted to our people in Cuito. We don't know who is in charge of receiving them and carrying them out. We don't even know if those instructions or views actually get there. Something is wrong in the transmission of orders. I am basing myself on your report that we have responsibility for what happens there."

"On the other hand, we feel there is a lack of foresight, that those in charge there don't realize the terrible effects on the military and political situation and on morale a disaster with the forces east of the river would have, and we don't even have a few boats to do what the British did with theirs in Dunkirk."

"Given these circumstances, I think Polo should stay in Cuito until all these extremely serious problems are settled. Send him an urgent message to this effect."

"In our opinion, the formula outlined in my message yesterday should be adopted without further delay, i.e., keep a strongly fortified position with no more than one brigade east of the river, with a staggered line of defense

Cuito Cuanavale became a trap for the South Africans . . .

and the tanks at the ready in the rear. I trust that by tonight you will start moving the artillery with the few means of transportation available along with the rest of the 21st and 8th brigades."

We were insisting that they move the artillery to the other side, bring all the Cuban and Angolan artillery to the west side of the river, reduce the line to the east, in short, measures which in our opinion should have been adopted under the circumstances.

Actually Polo was sent there and he solved the problem. He adjusted the lines and from then on all South African attacks were shattered by that position east of the river.

When they approached, they came under heavy artillery fire from the west where it was easier to provide ammunition. They were attacked by our MIG-23s flying at treetop level. They fell in the mine fields and several times they crashed against that unconquerable bastion. Even the Cuban battalion of tanks west of the river was involved in the fighting.

During that period the Angolan-Cuban forces had virtually no losses, a minimum. The troops were well fortified on both sides of the river and well supplied; the bulk in the west and a beachhead on the other side and the enemy was crushed. Cuito Cuanavale became a trap for the South Africans.

Meanwhile, what else was happening? Martínez was preparing to visit Colombia, looking for a false passport and making contacts.

How long did this critical situation last in Angola? On March 6, General Lorente was sent to Cuito Cuanavale. In Lubango Polo had to take charge of the entire Southern Front. That same day instructions were sent so that by no later than March 10, the Cuban forces should move south along the right side of the front, the most important strategic operation started while the enemy was still attacking in Cuito.

I should say that everything done in Cuito was done under constant shelling from the South African long-range artillery and during the months that Cuito Cuanavale was surrounded, they fired tens of thousands of shells on the town. But we had already managed to prevent the South Africans from capturing Cuito. They were stopped there, worn down, and our forces started to advance along the right side of the Southern Front together with three Angolan brigades.

The order to advance was given on March 6 and the troops started to move south.

I should point out that in view of the fact that the bulk of the troops and equipment were Cuban, [Angolan] President José Eduardo [dos Santos] assigned the responsibility of directing the operations to the Cuban military command.

That was also a very important and critical period. Our scout forces clashed with their South African counterparts, and there were a number of operations.

I remember that during that period we had to undertake another battle: in Cuito it was for readjustment of the defense lines and in the south it was against Ochoa's notion that the scouts should move on foot.

We analyzed the terrain. There was a lack of water and long distances, so we were determined that scouts should travel in vehicles. We couldn't send troops 50 or 60 kilometers ahead without vehicles to provide cover and supplies, which had to be at the most 8 or 10 kilometers away. There are both advantages and disadvantages to movement in vehicles. I advocated combining the advantages of scouting on foot with those of scouting in vehicles, but that's a long story. In the end, it was decided to back the scouts with armored vehicles and it proved successful.

Regarding this period, I will talk about something which happened in June. What happened in June? June was a critical month since our troops were approaching the border. When we began the advance south on March 10, our nearest airfields were in Lubango and Matala, 250 kilometers from where our troops had to go. Our air power could barely be used there. That's when we decided to build the Cahama airfield.

On March 22 we sent a brief dispatch to Ochoa saying: "What do you need and how long will it take to make the Cahama runway operational for combat planes if work is undertaken at full speed?"

That was the start of another great feat. Polo took charge of the situation and collected all the equipment he could. From Cuba we sent new equipment including trucks, bulldozers, and everything needed to build the airfield at full speed. The airport was built in a few weeks. The first runway was ready by June with its shelters for fighter planes, and the second was under construction. It was operational by June.

Later I will return to the subject of the airfields because there is something very important in connection with them.

What was the situation on June 7, 1988? A dispatch on that day sums it all up. I was wondering whether I should read it because it contains ideas about what was going to be done at that time, but in view of the significant progress of the peace process, which I think is irreversible, I will use it.

Likelihood of South African attack

There was news of the likelihood of a large-scale South African air attack against our advanced units. So we sent a dispatch which, this time, was addressed to Ochoa and Polo: "News of possible South African surprise air raid against Cuban-Angolan forces should not be underestimated, for it has a certain logic. Our troops should take strict security measures in their shelters. Antiaircraft equipment should be on full alert, especially at dawn, dusk, and all other hours of the day. Possible defense action by our air force using planes stationed in Cahama should be con-

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sidered. Plans should be made for a counterattack with every possible plane for the total destruction of the water tank and transformers in Ruacana, which should be undertaken as soon as possible after the attack.

"Plans should also be made for a strike at Ochicata and nearby airfields in response to the raid and in line with the magnitude of enemy action. We will have to use the Cahama airport as much as possible under the circumstances. Don't wait for orders" — you can see what powers they were given — "to act if there is really a big enemy attack against our forces. The response must be crushing and quick."

"I reiterate the need for peak readiness and protection of troops and the foremost use of anti-aircraft weapons. The Pechora regiment from Matala should be moved south as much as possible, preferably at night, to station two groups in Humbe and a group in Cahama. Keep the 85th tactical group there. Tchipa personnel should be kept alert and underground. Planned movements should make allowances for these risks."

"Decisive moments may be at hand." That was on June 7.

Message to Angolan president

That same day I wrote to José Eduardo because I must say that there was always a very fluid exchange of communication between José Eduardo and myself, close coordination. We briefed them on every step taken by our forces, every strategic operation was coordinated with him. I had already sent him other messages on the problem and my letter said:

"Dear Comrade José Eduardo:

"As you know, we have received intelligence reports saying that the South Africans are planning a large-scale surprise air raid on the Angolan-Cuban troop grouping in southern Angola. There is a certain logic to this report if we consider the desperate position of the South Africans as a result of the defeats and failures they have suffered in the military and diplomatic fields.

"They may be tempted to try a sudden blow to change the balance of forces using planes to incur the least possible number of white casualties.

"This morning we sent a message to Ochoa and Polo warning them not to underestimate the report and to keep the troops at peak combat readiness and adopt all security measures with planes ready to fly and stage a devastating counterattack.

"We have passed on the intelligence reports to the Soviets saying that there will be a swift and immediate response to any large-scale enemy raid."

In short, we were warning everybody of the danger and the likelihood that we would have to stage a big strike in northern Namibia.

We took every possible measure to protect men and equipment, all means of anti-aircraft defense. As troops advanced south, we were sending more and more complete groups from Cuba, whole regiments of anti-aircraft missiles, the best and the bulk of the light portable missiles. Thus we secured total anti-aircraft superiority, and we already had air superiority.

What happened? The South Africans started moving forces and at a given point they tried to do in the south what they were doing in Cuito. With their artillery, they started firing some cannons and one day — it was on June 26, I think — 200 shells fell on Tchipa where our forces were already located.

A dispatch was immediately sent to Ochoa and Polo: "We must respond to today's artillery attack against Tchipa. We feel the first step must be a strong air attack against South African camps, military installations, and personnel in Calueque and the surrounding area.

"Avoid as much as possible the loss of civilian life. If the enemy artillery can be located, strike a strong blow at it. We must have at the ready other variants of attack if the circumstances require. As a possible future step, we must decide if we strike at the military bases first and leave the Ruacana hydroelectric complex for later, or the other way around.

"The troops must be on the alert for any attack by land against Tchipa. Let us know what your plans are for the 85th tactical group, whether you are able to send it to Tchipa. You should speed up the construction of shelters in Cahama and the new runway." That was on the 26th.

On the 27th came our quite devastating air attack on Calueque, while on the ground the two sides' scout forces engaged in big clashes with unfavorable results for the South Africans. We were going to wait and see what happened. I sent another dispatch — this one is on June 27 — to Ochoa and Polo: "Maximum state of alert must be maintained in the next few hours and days, awaiting possible enemy response. You must be ready to strike a strong blow at enemy bases in northern Namibia, that is, the response prepared for a large-scale enemy air raid. You must consider which variants would inflict the largest casualty toll on the enemy.

"There must always be a point where the greatest number of weapons are used. The Ruacana hydroelectric complex can't be moved from where it is, so it will have its turn first or afterward, depending on the many situations that might



Militant/Sam Manuel
Woman working on farm cooperative in Huambo, Angola. "Not a single peasant was deprived of their sheep, goats, or cows" by Cuban troops in Angola, said Castro.



Ethiopian soldiers. Ochoa had helped lead Cuba's internationalist military missions in Ethiopia, Angola, and Nicaragua.



Militant/Robert Kopec
Nicaraguan soldiers. While head of Cuban military mission in Nicaragua, Ochoa stole money from Sandinista People's Army.

develop, although logic would indicate that if enemy action is serious, we should strike first at military targets. We have already given the first response, so now they must either reconsider or continue the escalation."

The South Africans staged a big uproar but they calmed down after that. The response that had been planned was really quite strong.

We estimated that the hydroelectric complex would take on strategic importance because they no longer had water from Calueque. However, they still had water and electricity from Ruacana and we had staggered our plans, contingent on the situation, to strike at one point or the other, depending on what the enemy did.

No peace yet

This happened in June. In September and October, when it's said they were involved in all these black market operations, what was happening? Had peace prevailed? No, there was no peace yet.

For example, here's a message I sent on Oct. 10, 1988, to Ochoa and Polo saying, "Negotiations have stagnated. South African demands are unacceptable. The maximum concessions were made in Brazzaville, so in New York our positions were inflexible.

"Although there is talk of new meetings in Brazzaville, don't pay too much attention to this. You must be ready for an impasse.

"I don't think the South Africans are eager to resume the hostilities, but we must be on the alert, especially against the risk of an air attack. We must prepare for the rains. Just as we discussed with Ochoa and Polo, spearhead contingents must stay in Calueque and Ruacana. The advance brigade should pull out of Donguena and so should the brigade stationed between Tchipa and Ruacana. A joint Cuban-Angolan detachment can stay in Tchipa.

"The bulk of the forces should pull back to the Cahama-Xangongo line. Anti-aircraft missiles must be at the Cahama-Mucope-Humbe-Xangongo line. Don't waste time. The planes must be ready to support the advance detachments in Calueque, Ruacana, and Tchipa.

"Prepare to blow up the Calueque and Ruacana dams if the enemy attacks our advance detachments."

We didn't leave many men in those advanced positions. It was very difficult to supply them, the rains were coming. The advance detachments stayed there, but their orders were to blow up the dams if they were attacked.

"Political work should focus on increasing the troops' combat readiness and preparing them for an impasse.

"According to reports from Western diplomats, the South Africans have concentrated large groups of men and matériel in Namibia. We must try to confirm this. It is our duty to be ready for anything. In this struggle the winner will be the one best able to resist."

These messages can give you and our people an exact idea of what was happening in Angola in all these months, in the first stages of the crisis and afterwards. All these dispatches talk about clashes in the south, Cuban-SWAPO [South West Africa People's Organisation] and Cuban-Angolan scout operations; sometimes they were Cuban-SWAPO and others, Cuban-Angolan.

When we could expect decisive moments, big battles — actually there were no big battles because our forces were very strong; the measures we had taken were so powerful, they were so reliable with the construction of the airport, our air and anti-aircraft support was so significant that the enemy backed down. I think that was the real victory: to obtain the basic objectives without sacrificing thousands of lives.

If we had to wage big battles, we'd fight, because there was no alternative. But the idea was to achieve the goals with a minimum of casualties, and this was done, always ready and anticipating all the dangers or other situations that could turn up.

Meanwhile, Martínez was with drug traffickers

We mustn't forget, comrades, that when this was happening, when tens of thousands of shells were falling on Cuito Cuanavale — because it was besieged for many months — when men were preparing decisive operations, when about 40,000 Cuban soldiers were in action in the south and preparing for decisive battles, Martínez was meeting with Colombian drug traffickers here and went to another meeting with Mexican drug traders and was organizing drug operations in April with members of de la Guardia's group. And in May he met with [Pedro] Escobar in Colombia. Then in June, the period covered in these dispatches, the period of events in Calueque, they were awaiting a ship with two tons of drugs which was to arrive two months after the meeting.

It is impossible to forget this and it is very difficult for us to forget it because we lived through that drama day by day, lived through the risks and struggles in Angola. We received instant news of every man wounded in combat or on a mission, or those who were killed in combat or in a mine field or in an accident. We felt responsible for the lives of each and every one of those men, each one and all 50,000

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of them. And we practically didn't do government work in 1988.

From mid-November 1987 to late 1988, we didn't do government work. We dedicated all our time, all of it, to that struggle, to that war. It couldn't have been otherwise. We had to assume responsibility for what happened there.

“Even the revolution was at stake in this battle...”

Even the revolution was at stake there, because if this was a decisive battle for apartheid and meant a large-scale defeat, the revolution was also at stake and a different outcome would have meant a major defeat for the revolution, regardless of how noble, how just, and how altruistic the cause.

I maintain that even the revolution was at stake in that battle, and we couldn't even concern ourselves with government issues — at least I couldn't. The Central Group was working and I spent 80 percent of my time on this battle. We put aside key things in view of the serious situation that had developed.

There is no doubt about it, history will show, for the glory of our homeland and our party, for the glory of our heroic fighters, how a situation that seemed lost was saved and peace was achieved! It happened precisely because of that, because the party and the High Command of the armed forces were given over to this. Everyone concentrated on it. If we had to mobilize a boat, the General Staff took less than two hours to do it. If it had to be loaded, if we had to mobilize a missile group, it was done immediately, because we could count on the efficiency of our armed forces and that marvelous thing which is our people's enthusiasm, our people's heroic spirit, our people's generosity. The same people who now demand justice and who went over there en masse: workers, farmers, who make up the reserves of our armed forces; recruits who went voluntarily because everybody who went to Angola did so voluntarily.

“While on the one hand the most glorious page was being written, on the other was the most shameful...”

While on the one hand the most glorious page was being written, on the other, the most shameful was being written in large measure by the head of the Cuban military mission in Angola.

Black market deals

Now there is something else we must consider, that is, the whole business of black market deals, allegedly to benefit the troops. Does anybody really think it's possible to help an army of 50,000 men and build an airfield in six or seven weeks by collecting kwanzas [the Angolan currency] in a *candonga*? Who will swallow such a story? It's the most absurd thing I've ever heard.

Here we have the same dispatch I mentioned before:

“What do you need and how long will it take to make the Cahama runway operational for combat planes if work is undertaken at full speed?” It was just a question. If it was decided to build another airfield, they were to say what they needed and how long it would take so we could send what we had here, as we did to build the one in Cahama. If it was a case like Catumbela and Cabo Ledo, we'd use all the means and resources in the country because the country gave top priority to the war in Angola.

We even sent candy to soldiers. Every day I would ask at General Staff headquarters how many tons of candies, cookies, chocolate had been sent to the soldiers, how they were, what kind of raincoats they had, how they slept, what kind of mattresses they had, how much food they had. And everything the country had was at their disposal.

How many thousands of bags of cement, 60,000 bags! I still remember how in the General Staff we asked about the boat and how many bags were on each boat for the Cahama airfield; what day it was leaving, if we needed paper for the bags going to Angola and how many boats. Everything was devoted to that.

We wondered if it would be better to send asphalt from here or buy it in Portugal or elsewhere in Europe, anywhere, wherever it was fastest, paying it under any conditions.

Everything we had was at the disposal of the front and the battle, and I said, “If we have to build a Coppelia ice cream factory in the south, we will do it so that the troops will have all they need.” That was our concern: medicine, equipment, shoes, etc. That was the concern of the General Staff, concern for the conditions the troops were in. And the willingness was such as to send the whole country there, what we had and what we didn't have.

How can you wage war gathering kwanzas? That was

just an excuse to conceal the theft of money and resources. Unfortunately, that's the truth, it's sad but that's the case — allegedly to meet the needs of the front.

In the operational zones the army was authorized to barter. Not to deal on the black market, but to barter, because this is a cattle area and the peasants have herds, but because of the war they have no resources. They weren't interested in money, they wanted merchandise, and the officers there were authorized to engage in barter trade. It was legal on the battlefield and was known to the Angolans and to everybody else. In the south they swapped sugar, salt, and other of the troops' rations for what the peasants had.

Not a single peasant was deprived of their sheep, goats, or cows. Everything was paid for but in kind, which was the only thing of value there.

Ochoa's pretext

What Ochoa did, surreptitiously, on the basis of that principle authorized in the operational zones and with a similar pretext of meeting needs, was doing unnecessary barter and exchanges in Luanda.

In fact, this may not have aroused a lot of attention. It is understandable that some officers were confused if he said it was to meet the troops' needs and to build the airfield. Even if what he did, everything he did had really been to help the troops and help build the airfield, it would have been wrong, a mistake. It was wrong to get involved in the black market, to send a captain loaded with bags to sell for kwanzas. It would have been a mitigating factor if it had been used for the war, but actually it wasn't.

Helping the troops was an excuse. He may have delivered a few kwanzas that wouldn't have covered even a square meter of the airfield, because we know what an airfield takes and how to build one in wartime. That was the excuse for the other operations.

As I said, the money from those operations came to Cuba and from here it went to Panama. There is no excuse for that. How can we get involved in the black market there even if it's for the troops? How can we get involved in black marketeering if every year we received \$20 million for our civilian technical cooperation program, a very reasonable price given that we had thousands of people there, civilian and not military because we never charged for military cooperation. But we had thousands of workers there including teachers and doctors, and so the country was receiving about \$20 million, charging a modest fee because any other foreign technician charges four or five times that much.

Considering Angola's economic problems, given the problems they had in 1983 in the wake of Cangamba, when José Eduardo came here for a visit, we said that they shouldn't pay us anything for the civilian aid, that we would continue to provide it. In the six years since then we have not received \$120 million. How can a country that is making these kinds of sacrifices, this internationalist effort in the technical field alone, even donating civilian help — not to mention the lives and blood of our people, which cannot be paid for with all the money in the world — how can it make any sense for a country making these sacrifices to have engaged in black market operations in Angola? This cannot be explained. This has no justification whatsoever.

Stole from Angola, stole from Nicaragua

Then we have the things that were happening here, the question of the account in Panama. This is very important, and very serious. How was the account in Panama set up? It was set up with ill-gotten money. The entire account was set up with stolen money, the \$200,000, which was in Martínez' name.

They had stolen money from the Nicaraguans and kept it there. This is the origin of the account. They had stolen from the Angolans, because they were given money to buy communications equipment. They bought this at a low price and what was left over they kept — apart from what was spent on other things — and put in the account.

They stole it from Angola on the black market and stole from Cuba, because if they traded cement for something there, that cement belonged to Cuba. What's more, it was cement misused in wartime. In a war you can't sell a bag of cement, because you never know when you'll need that cement, for fortifications, for bridges, for whatever. Cement is a strategic material, it can't be sold.

The sugar came from Cuba, they sold part of it on the black market. They handed in part of the income because it was the pretext for certain activities and they kept the rest. So they stole from Nicaragua and they stole from Angola in two ways: through the communications equipment and through the black market. And they stole from Cuba because the products were Cuban. The Panama account is thus the product of four robberies.

There was something else. We didn't know why Ochoa ordered some weapons to be sent from Angola to Nicaragua. We said: What a strange thing. What's the point of that? He sent guns and quite a few other things for Nicaragua. We wondered what the purpose was. We couldn't explain it.

However, recently we received a report from the Sandinista People's Army [EPS] which explained why he sent those weapons. And you will understand perfectly.



Castro addresses Third Congress of Communist Party of C. In the wake of the decisive measures taken against Ochoa understood and the party will have much more leverage to anything that smells rotten.”

The secret report says — I hope this doesn't do any harm to the Nicaraguans, revealing some information they give here which explains the armaments operation — “Early in 1987 Ochoa told the head of the Nicaraguan General Staff that he was ready and able to fulfill whatever needs for military equipment from the West” — you can see here what a charlatan he was — “the EPS had in order to strengthen military operations against the mercenary forces.”

It seems that, indeed, he got them a bit of matériel. After he supplied them he told them that he could get whatever Western arms they needed.

The report continues, which I'll read parts of:

“In this context, in early March 1987, Maj. Gen. Joaquín Cuadra Lacayo made an agreement with the then representative of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces in Nicaragua, Division Gen. Arnaldo Ochoa, for the purchase of 100 M-79 German-made grenade launchers with 20,000 grenades.

“Maj. Gen. Joaquín Cuadra Lacayo, through the financial branch of the EPS, paid out the sum of \$120,000, a sum which was received on behalf of Ochoa by his assistant Jorge Martínez Valdés, then a captain in the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces. And on March 5, 1987, Martínez was given 41,000 — \$41,000! — “for a total of \$161,000.”

The report goes on to explain: “Months later Martínez, on instructions from Ochoa, told Maj. Gen. Joaquín Cuadra Lacayo that the deal had been stalled, that the suppliers were having trouble getting the shipment to Nicaragua.



Gianfranco Gorgoni, reprinted by permission of Pathfinder Press. Ochoa, which launched the "rectification process" in 1986. Ochoa and others, said Castro, rectification "will be better demand and impose standards, as well as to sweep away

"The deal in question never materialized, and Maj. Gen. Joaquín Cuadra Lacayo considered it temporarily off, after Martínez told him that it was impossible to carry out the operation and that the deposit had been lost, that it was impossible to return it because of problems in these kinds of transactions."

The report goes on to say: "On Sept. 22, 1988, Arnaldo Ochoa, now the head of the Cuban military mission in Angola, told the Sandinista People's Army, via his replacement in Nicaragua, Brig. Gen. Néstor López Cuba, that he had sent to Nicaragua from Angola the following weapons: 50 Yugoslav AK rifles, 200 rifle magazines, 50 magazine holders, 50 bayonets, 50 holsters, 50 accessories cases, 50 oil cans, four 60mm mortars, 2,664 50mm mortar shells, 560 antipersonnel grenades, and 2,016 40mm cartridges for i-79s." All these weapons were received by Nicaragua in 1988, and the Sandinista People's Army considered it, if only in part, as compensation for the failure of the above-mentioned agreement.

It should be said that 2,016 grenades must cost a lot of money on the arms black market. They can easily cost \$100 each, so that 2,016 grenades could cost about \$200,000. Mortar shells are also expensive. The truth is that what Ochoa sent, acquired on the black market, could have cost as much or more — as much or more! — as the money he had already received.

The report concludes with this paragraph: "Neither Ochoa nor Martínez ever told us that the money was safely deposited in a bank in Panama. We had already given it up as lost." It says, "he never told us the money was safe."

Here everything is made clear. What happened? They gave him 120,000, and then 41,000. The first 120,000 they gave to the supplier. The supplier eventually said he couldn't carry out the operation and returned 75,000, so that they lost \$45,000. But with what the supplier returned and the other 41,000, they still had \$116,000 in the account. And then what happened? They got a hold of — I don't know if they requisitioned it, if someone gave it to them, or if they stole it — mortar shells and M-79 shells in Angola and sent them to Nicaragua to fulfill to some extent their obligations. They put away \$116,000 from this operation, to which they added some 40,000 or 50,000 they had to return to the Angolans, making about 160,000, to which was added the money they made on the black market, making up the \$200,000 account.

The origins of the money are clear, they stole from everyone to start the account. At this point there was still not any drug money.

It isn't necessary to repeat here what everyone already knows about Martínez' meetings, his trip to Colombia, his meeting with Escobar. But there can be no doubt that one of the most serious deeds, I would say more serious than the story of the Panamanian account and its origins, is to have sent an officer of our Revolutionary Armed Forces to Colombia on a false passport, to put him in the hands of the enemy, when in Angola we were fighting decisive battles, where everything was on the line, including the revolution. This is an extremely serious act.

What was his most serious crime? It wasn't just talking about organizing large drug shipments through Cuba, first via a merchant ship and later by plane. He conspired to do this, but he never managed to achieve any of his operations.

“ Most serious crime was joining forces with Interior Ministry mafia . . . ”

The most serious thing is that, knowing that a mafia existed within the Ministry of the Interior, in the MC Department, which had carried out drug-running operations, he joined forces with them and sought their cooperation: in getting Martínez to travel to Colombia, in having Martínez pass above MINFAR regulations, in having Martínez come and go as he pleased without anyone knowing, and, what's more, he sought their cooperation in organizing large drug-running operations. He became part of the group and ended up receiving \$50,000 from them for the last drug-smuggling operation. He asked for \$100,000 and got 50,000.

That a Hero of the Republic, a member of the Central Committee, a division general, the leader of the most important military mission Cuba had abroad ran up against this mafia, this group of gangsters, and didn't immediately turn them in but on the contrary joined them, this is very serious!

I ask myself: Why did this group become so bold? This group, which started out slowly and cautiously, really took off in 1988 and 50 percent of their operations were carried out in four months. In one month five or six operations were carried out, and who knows how many more. Why?

It's certain that when these people saw Ochoa return from Angola, about to assume the leadership of the Western Army, demanding that he also be given control of DAAFAR [Revolutionary Antiaircraft Defense and Air Force] and the western navy — as is the case in the Eastern Army — these people must have thought themselves the safest in the world. That a member of the Central Committee, a Hero of the Republic, a division general, a man with the prestige of Ochoa was tied up in this, must have spurred them on and given them encouragement, and I think that this is extremely serious.

Despite his difficulties, Ochoa didn't give up, he didn't abandon his plans. He had plans to carry out his activities right up until April of this year. This we know from all the evidence we have gathered.

He persisted in thinking about large operations. He persisted in the idea of using a merchant ship which would transport 10 tons of cocaine, which would wait off the northern coast and there wait for speedboats to come pick up the drugs. He argued a lot with Tony de la Guardia, because Tony de la Guardia, who was proceeding carefully and slowly with his operations until the end of 1988, told him that it was not possible to carry out these operations with the boatmen, that they were unreliable, that they came and went, that when they got some money they just wanted to spend it, that it was impossible to ship 10 tons of cocaine. Ochoa discussed these problems with Tony de la Guardia a lot, he insisted on them. It was an idea which, as we shall see, was completely crazy.

I figured out what was needed to earn the kind of money he talked about — because in his fantasies he talked about making billions — I figured out what he needed to do to earn \$4 billion, which he said he was going to earn from abroad to invest in Cuba. This is what the prosecutor called the great plan, a large money-laundering operation. I cal-

culated that at \$1,000 per kilogram, he needed 400 shipments by boat and 8,000 pickups by boat if each boat carried 10 tons and each speedboat 500 kilograms.

These figures make me think of the foreign debt. This was what was needed to earn \$4 billion. It was an incredible fantasy and lack of realism. But this was his plan! And the serious thing is that he hung onto this plan when he knew that he was going to assume the leadership of the Western Army, for when he returned from Angola not much was known about Ochoa.

And I must say, if there is one institution where it's known what people are doing it's MINFAR, because MINFAR has the means and the organization necessary to undertake this kind of control.

His activities in Angola I've already described as camouflaged as wartime activities, and his closest colleagues were fooled.

Ochoa's talk of deals

When Ochoa would come back to Cuba he'd talk about business deals. Every time he met with Raúl he wanted to talk about deals, and he always received the same advice. And he spoke about deals that were presumably serious.

At times he would say some crazy thing and everyone took it as a joke, because he had already established his style of speaking seriously and jokingly, and when he said something silly, people laughed. And what he was told by MINFAR, and what he was told by Raúl was: "Dedicate yourself to your military tasks, forget about business, that isn't your job, it's not your field, what you have to do is dedicate yourself to military activities."

But Ochoa mentioned this drug business to one person — to only one of these officers! — which would have provoked indignation, would have worried, scandalized, and repelled any other officer. It's possible that if he had told four it would have inevitably become known, because MINFAR has its organization, military counterintelligence — and I know how military counterintelligence works! And there were really very few things that were known about Ochoa. Some things, more than anything else, of a moral nature, not criminal, or at least not criminal offenses but rather moral offenses, but then information began to be received about his conduct.

The most serious thing of all, the involvement with drugs, he told one single officer, whom he had already corrupted, and this officer was won over by this dirty deal. His plans were also supported by Tony de la Guardia's group, despite the fact that at some point he said that this group was incompetent, that they were a bunch of fools, that he was going to strike out on his own, etc. But, practically until the moment this group fell apart, he was still insisting on doing big drug deals, so that he was still pursuing this, from 1986 until practically mid-1989. This is the reality that we were able to perceive.

Tony de la Guardia's case

The group of Tony de la Guardia — as someone said here — is a different case because Tony de la Guardia is neither a hero nor a member of the Central Committee nor a division general, nor did he have the responsibilities that Ochoa did. The case of Tony de la Guardia is very serious, extremely serious! I don't mean it wasn't as serious as Ochoa's; what I'm saying is that it was different from Ochoa's. It also has very serious, very traitorous, very dangerous connotations. For while Ochoa couldn't, didn't have the time, wasn't successful, and didn't carry out any of his drug-trafficking operations, these other people had already carried out quite a few operations.

By the time Martínez visited Escobar, Tony de la Guardia and his group had already been carrying out drug operations for a year and a half.

All this has been publicly aired and proven. They pleaded noble goals. Everybody pleaded noble goals. Ochoa, that he wanted to solve the problems of underdevelopment — which didn't fit in with what they did with the money — and these other people, too: to help the country. Helping the country that way was, as has already been said, sticking a knife in its back.

You have all mentioned that subject here, there's no need for me to go into it further. I'll be coming back to it later for other reasons.

Tony de la Guardia set up a repugnant gang inside the Ministry of the Interior, something truly incredible, inconceivable, something even hard to explain how it came about. They were rather hermetic, of course, for they knew that what they were doing was very serious; but what they were doing was also very treacherous, the way they were doing it.

The fact is that a cancer emerged. How was it detected, how was it discovered? It was detected through Ochoa's case.

Who could ever have imagined that Ochoa was engaged in activities of this sort? Who could have ever imagined that an entire department of the Ministry of the Interior was carrying out these activities?

But an investigation had already been launched. Why was it launched?

Obviously, these people, as has been shown, seem to have
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carried out very few operations in the beginning. They did five in 1987, spaced out, one every two or three months; they did two successful ones in 1988 and had three failures. They did, I believe, nine, with a marijuana operation on the north coast of Pinar del Río Province, nine operations in 1989.

There were anti-Cuba campaigns — as Comrade Chomy [José Miyar] said here — campaigns were being launched. Naturally, our first reaction, having for 30 years grown used to all sorts of lies, slander, and infamy against us, was that it simply involved another concoction, new lies spread by the United States. We didn't pay particular attention to that.

Chomy recalled the moment in February 1988 when a big campaign, a series of allegations and charges, had been made. They even mentioned Raúl; he was being accused of that. We were really irate.

Instructions to Alarcón

We were already involved in peace talks in Angola. Cuba was already taking part in peace talks on southern Africa and some of our comrades were in contact with the Americans for that reason. I recall I instructed Comrade [Ricardo] Alarcón, the deputy foreign minister, to lodge a strong protest during one of those contacts with the American officials, for the type of campaign they were making against Cuba.

I have the report somewhere here. But if it's alright, I'll only read a bit of it to you, what Alarcón told that high-ranking official to protest against the anti-Cuban charges, the attempt to implicate Raúl in this filthy thing. Actually, I'm going to read to you here just one paragraph and I'm going to utter a strong word, I have no choice but to utter it, I didn't say it, but it was what I instructed Alarcón to tell them.

That paragraph of Alarcón's report says, "In line with the instructions that the commander in chief gave me, I told this official" — I'm not going to mention his name — "that those who promoted and made these charges against us were sons of bitches." That was the word used in the diplomatic conversation Alarcón had with this American official, and it conveyed our indignation over these campaigns which we viewed as absolute slander. And they were, in part, as they began to involve the names of people and leaders in the government. In this case, as we were then holding talks, we said it was an act of bad faith.

The officials of the State Department answered that these weren't State Department campaigns but that those reports had surfaced at the Department of Justice and that they really had nothing to do with that, and that we shouldn't think it was them or that it was an act of bad faith on the part of the Department of State or the government of the United States.

Today we know that these fellows had been carrying out operations since early 1987, that they had been doing it for over a year. Although everything seemingly indicates that the first shipment by plane arrived in April 1987, it was in January that the first trips had been made to coordinate these operations.

I thought that the charges against Raúl derived from the fact that an armed forces officer had spoken to Pablo Escobar. It wasn't clear how Martínez had introduced himself to Escobar, but judging by what he said it's clear that without specifically saying, "I represent this or that," Martínez acted as if he were a representative of the Cuban government. And we know that it was believed there that he was a government envoy, although they were not certain, they weren't completely sure of this. But he introduced himself in such a way that the issue was unclear.

I thought that the presence of this officer there had led to these charges, but later on when we were analyzing what went on at the trial and even after that, while going over the documents, I realized that even before Martínez went to Colombia these charges were being made. This is perfectly logical, it's clear. Why? If the Tony de la Guardia people had met a plane with that man Ruiz on board, Miguel Ruiz Poo's relative, if these people met it in Santa Clara, a military base; if, in addition, the first cocaine shipment was unloaded at the Varadero airport, in the small military zone of that airport; if the landing of a plane there has to be authorized by anti-aircraft defense, then these things are perfectly possible — because if they come and say they are expecting a big shot, perhaps a big businessman, or that someone very important for their activities in the Ministry of the Interior is expected and they ask the FAR to collaborate, it's understandable that the FAR would immediately help out, whether the plane landed at Holguín, Guantánamo, or anywhere else.

Flight permits are perfunctorily given; who knows how many planes fly over the country. Notice must be given and certain steps must be taken. When these people said they were expecting someone, a big businessman, an important agent, what have you, who was going to fly in, they automatically got a permit because, who could have thought that what these criminals were asking was permission for a plane loaded with drugs to land?

But they didn't come through José Martí Airport, they came through Santa Clara, once, twice, they came and parked in the military zone, and logically the Americans started to think that the armed forces must have known something about that operation and then they began — in bad faith, of course — to implicate Raúl in this problem. In other words, since some time before Ochoa and because of

the activities of Tony de la Guardia's group, they began making accusations.

Necessary to reflect on Americans' attitude

At this point it's necessary to reflect on the Americans' attitude before going on.

We now know that the Americans had at least two names as they themselves have admitted: the first, Tony de la Guardia, and the second, Miguel Ruiz Poo. They themselves have said they had recorded discussions in Panama between an agent of theirs and this Ruiz Poo.

It's quite possible, it's nearly certain that they had more names of officers involved in this activity. Well, when they saw our Coast Guard cutters, when they saw a whole series of movements, perhaps they thought that all this was authorized by the government.

More than the accusation in itself, what's really irritating is the idea that we could sell ourselves off for the two bits raised by Tony de la Guardia and his group. For a group this may be quite a lot, but for a country it's insignificant, miniscule, ridiculous, disgusting.

Regardless of what the U.S. government may or may not think about the Cuban revolution, it's not possible to think that it believed that Cuba could have solved any problem with that pittance. How much did these people raise the first year? A million-odd dollars. And the second year, how much did they collect? Another million and some. And by the third year they kept a faster pace, perhaps 3 million that year.

We figure that these people raked in a total of 3.5 million. Some money was owed to them and I imagine these things always happen in this type of operation. What are \$2 million for a country that exports billions of dollars of sugar each

There's no amount of money that this country could sell itself off for . . .

year, of nickel, agricultural produce, industrial products? And so, regardless of the opinion the Americans may have about the revolution, it's not possible that they believed that our country would sell itself off for two bits.

There's no amount of money that this country could sell itself off for, that's impracticable. No revolution is viable if it has to depend on drug trafficking, even if it came to billions. It's not viable for a revolution in this hemisphere, 90 miles from the United States, that sustains itself on its principles, its morale, its seriousness, to sustain itself in that way.

Yes, let them accuse us, if they want, of being revolutionaries. Let them accuse us of having helped the revolutionary movement, let them accuse us of fulfilling internationalist missions; in the revolutionary field let them accuse us of anything they want. But to think that our country is so low ranking that it would try to solve economic problems with that pittance, it's almost an insult to common sense. That's elementary, an insult to the intelligence of our leaders, of our country, of our revolution.

What they did wasn't correct, as they could have told us somehow to warn us: "Look, here are the names of two men dealing in drugs; we've checked it." Now, when it's a public denunciation made by someone in court, we don't pay too much attention because these characters are criminals who are about to be convicted and they're offered anything to make any statement in exchange for some kind of gain; that's not serious.

They could have certainly told us, discreetly: "Look here, this isn't a charge before a court, this is no propaganda, we know for a fact that two of your officers are making these deals in such and such a manner." They could have put us to a test, really, by doing that. I don't think they would have blown any of their agents' cover.

They didn't have to explain to us how they knew this but simply say, "We have reliable reports that these two men are doing this and they're doing it in such and such a way." Nothing more. We would have uncovered all this long ago. I don't know how long they've had these names, but they've had Ruiz Poo's name since early on. They've known since early on that a plane landed in Varadero with drugs, which were later transhipped by speedboats.

Share information on assassination plot

It isn't that we are trying to pin the blame on the United States. That isn't our intent. But I can give you an example of something that happened not so long ago. Cuban intelligence learned that a group of reactionary elements in one U.S. state — I don't remember the exact facts right now — was plotting to assassinate Reagan, plotting to murder Reagan!

The information we had wasn't very precise and to find out more we would have had to carry out an investigation in the United States. However, not even 48 hours went by, I believe it was less than 24 hours, when I gave instructions to the Ministry of the Interior to report confidentially to the U.S. authorities that some people in a southern state of the United States were plotting to assassinate Reagan when he visited that state shortly. We immediately informed them of

this. We didn't waste a minute on investigations nor did we wait to make checks nor to see if Reagan was killed. We didn't stop to think that Reagan was a sworn enemy of the revolution and that his policy on Cuba was very aggressive. We thought it was an elemental duty to report something like this.

I think that the only two times we've made gestures toward Reagan were when he was actually shot and wounded and we conveyed to the U.S. government our concern for what had happened, our opposition to that. The other time was when we learned that some people wanted to murder the president of the United States, and we didn't hesitate to report it. . . . We didn't make it known then, it is only now that we're bringing it up — it must have happened a few years ago — because we have no choice but to recall the incident now.

In the same manner that we conveyed that information to them, they could have given us now the information they had on this, in a confidential way, just like we did with them. This is what really pains us.

Now then, in spite of everything and their secrecy, we were already investigating this question of drug trafficking. On the strength of what? On the strength of these campaigns, on the strength of rumors that reached us from friends of ours in Colombia. It was said in certain drug circles that there were Cuban officials involved, Cuban people were collaborating with them. They even mentioned that some people had been swindled out of certain amounts of drugs, a certain shipment.

So, on the one hand, we witnessed the U.S. campaigns, and on the other, we heard the rumors reaching us about what some drug lords were saying. Rumors reaching us from several sources, without mentioning names, of course.

U.S. news dispatch

Added to this was a dispatch dated March 6, 1989. What did the dispatch say? It gave quite a lot of detail. It said: "Two drug traffickers pleaded guilty to charges of shipping over a ton of cocaine through Cuba, with the alleged assistance of members of the military and officials of that country, the Miami office of the federal attorney reported today."

"Reinaldo and Rubén Ruiz admitted their guilt on the 27 counts filed against them and they could be given life sentences, a prosecution spokesman said."

"The two men arraigned here carried cocaine in a light plane in February 1988 from Colombia with stopovers in Panama, Cuba, and Haiti, according to the charges."

"The gang had been infiltrated by secret agents posing as buyers who succeeded in videotaping and recording their meetings with the defendants, the prosecution explained."

"In dozens of hours of videotape and recordings admitted by the court as evidence, Reinaldo and Rubén Ruiz claimed to have extensive high-level contacts in Cuba and boasted that they smoked Havana cigars, which they claimed came from Fidel's desk drawer."

"The dossier describes in detail two cases according to which Rubén Ruiz had flown from Colombia to the Varadero military airport in Cuba with 1,000 pounds, 500 kilograms, each time."

"On the next occasion, in April 1987, the drugs were unloaded by military personnel, taken to a pier and loaded onto a boat named *Florida*, which was escorted by the Cuban Coast Guard until it left Cuba's territorial waters, said the document."

It's true that when I read this, particularly the part about the cigars taken from my drawer, I had the impression it was one more piece of slander because, among other things, it's been about four years now that I quit smoking and so there couldn't be any cigars in my drawer. By 1987 I was not smoking. The way of saying this smacked of the sort of thing I was just talking about: the prisoner is condemned, he's lost and will say anything they want him to say.

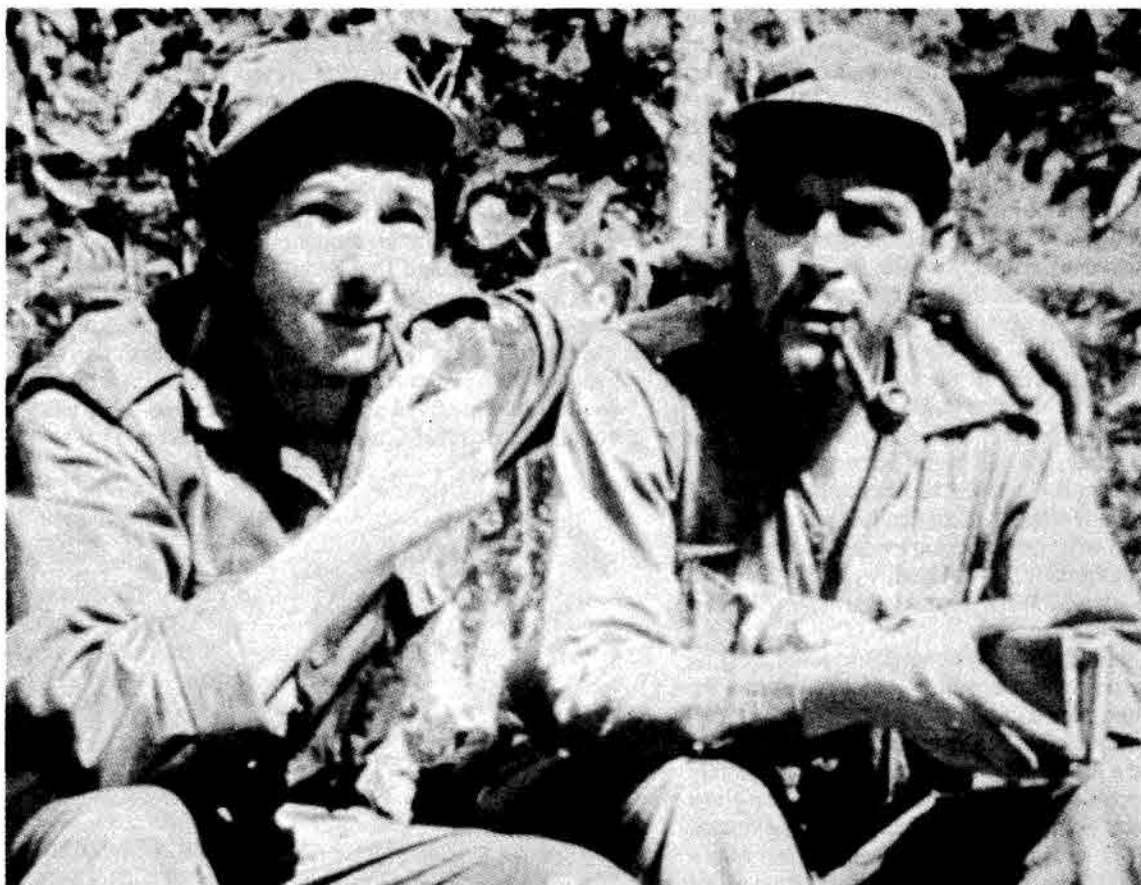
All the same, what I felt about this was a bit like what I felt in the first months of our fight in the Sierra Maestra when I realized that Eutimio Guerra was betraying us. It struck me as somewhat odd because of the coincidence of what these people were saying, the rumors and news reaching us about what mafia bosses were saying, what the Americans were saying in early 1988, and what they were saying now and giving these details. I then spoke with Comrade [José] Abrantes, minister of the interior, and told him to carry out an investigation.

Someone is involved in this here

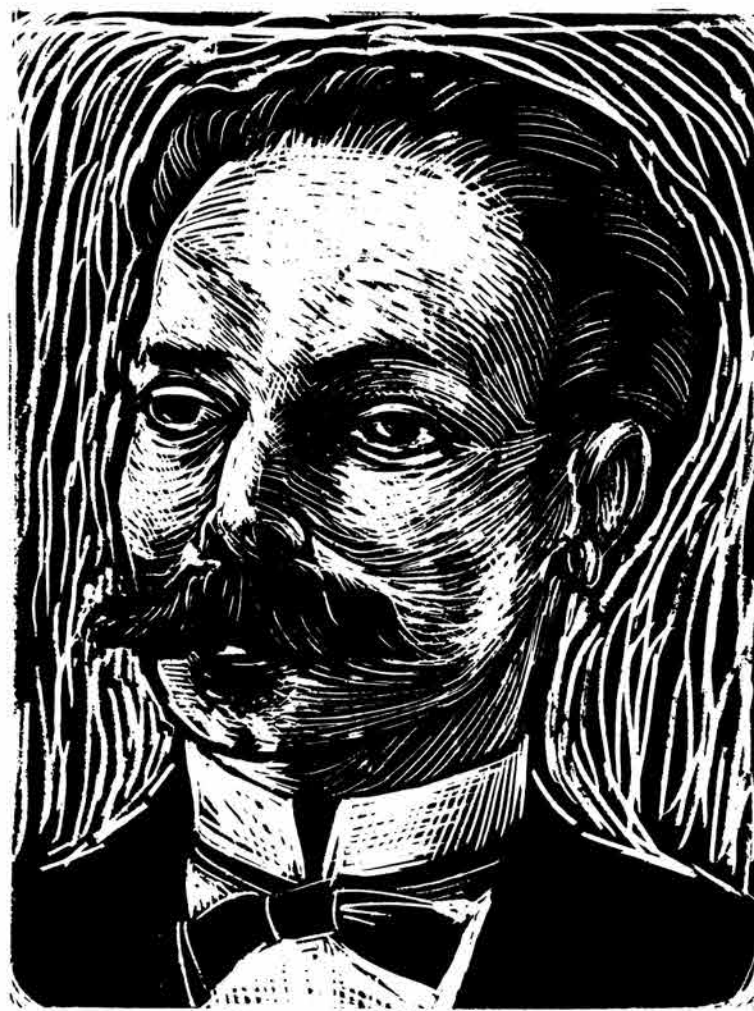
I must admit to you that I was far from imagining that there could be an entire gang inside the Ministry of the Interior doing this. But I said to myself: someone's involved in this here, there's someone doing something here, there's someone here who is even perhaps swindling these drug traffickers. So I came to the conclusion that we had to investigate, that this couldn't simply be dismissed as unfounded rumors, as mere slander, and that we had to investigate.

This happened in mid-March. It must have been a few days after I read the dispatch. This doesn't mean that the dispatches sent out by these agencies are serious. As a rule, only rarely do they tell the truth.

Just now I was reading a UPI dispatch that said that a light plane being chased by the Coast Guard entered Cuban



Raúl Castro (left) and Ernesto Che Guevara, leaders of July 26 Movement and Rebel Army during insurrection that overthrew U.S.-backed dictator Batista in 1959. Ochoa was also a guerrilla fighter, and it was precisely his prestige as a longtime leader of the armed forces, explained Fidel Castro, that made his crimes so grave. José Martí (right), Cuba's national hero, who was killed in independence struggle against Spain. In weighing the death sentence for Ochoa and the others, Castro said, he thought about all those who have died throughout Cuba's history to make it "a decent country."



territory and that MIG planes took off to prevent the Coast Guard planes from penetrating our waters. This was what a dispatch said today and, well, it was a big lie. The Americans themselves must know the truth because they were told.

Already three light planes have narrowly escaped being shot down. This isn't an easy task when they fly in at night with their lights out and at low altitude.

But, by the way, the day before yesterday, at night, a light plane was indeed being chased by Coast Guard planes and it entered Cuban territory. Two MIG-21s immediately took off to intercept the light plane they were chasing — it was flying on a north-south course — and later two other MIGs had to take off because the first two had run out of fuel. It was nighttime and they were even given the order to shoot down the light plane. But in the end it managed to escape.

We have already ordered three light planes to be shot down for flying over the country in a highly irregular manner.

That is, what happened was just that — two of our planes took off and chased the light plane; later two others took off; the light plane crossed Cuba and disappeared. I don't know at what altitude — it was at night, at about 10:00 p.m. Our Coast Guard was instructed to inform the U.S. authorities of what had happened at that time of night.

Bad faith

And just look at their bad faith, look at their bad faith and their manner of campaigning! What their dispatch said was that our planes took off to intercept the U.S. Coast Guard planes and that the light plane entered Cuban territory as if it actually got protection while flying over Cuba.

We must discuss it with the Americans, and we've exchanged some notes — rather than notes they were opinions, very informally expressed — we must discuss this situation to see how it is actually going to be handled. Because we said what we said in all seriousness concerning planes that violate our airspace. That was a very serious statement but, of course, taking every step to ensure that innocent, mistaken people aren't hurt by the consequences. This calls for very precise training of our pilots to prevent such accidents from happening.

So, this will have to be regulated somehow and we must look for some form of communication between Cuba and the United States in this common battle — we say common because in fact we're doing the same, although for different reasons.

The Americans know this and I have explained it in some interviews — that these planes often violate our airspace and when given the order to land they just laughed and ignored it. We didn't shoot because it's a very hard decision to shoot down one of these planes that doesn't obey the order to land. It may be carrying a drug trafficker, maybe a journalist, or even a U.S. senator who's lost his way, or it may be a private individual who when ordered to land doesn't want to do so in this "hell" that U.S. propaganda has depicted it to be.

That is, we have spoken about this publicly more than once. This is a situation which we had to bring to an end somehow. And now, of course, it is absolutely intolerable. We can't allow our airspace to be violated. And for years one of those who violated it was the United States. While drug

traffickers were able to violate it to carry out their dealings, the United States would send its planes to spy on Cuba and violate our airspace. Thus we have had two violators, the drug traffickers and the United States.

Airspace violations using that special plane they had haven't occurred for some time, but the violations commit-

“We can't allow our airspace to be violated . . .”

ted by drug trafficking gangs are frequent. On many occasions they are not violations, technically speaking, for they come along the air lanes and meet the pertinent requirements.

Of course, it's impossible along the air lanes to inspect the cargo on a light plane to see what it's carrying. But if they leave the air lane or the assigned altitude then it is possible to detect an irregularity. And, of course, this must stop.

Is it that we are anxiously waiting to shoot down one of these planes? No, we're not anxious, our pilots have been very careful. But if we want the sovereignty of our country to be respected, if we want our legal provisions to be heeded, we will have no choice but to shoot at these planes that in a very odd, strange, highly irregular manner violate our airspace; and, of course, seeing to it that in no case a passenger plane gets involved in an accident of this sort.

Well then, I've mentioned how U.S. propaganda works. They were accusing us or trying to hint that we had protected the plane, that our fighter planes had taken off to keep the U.S. Coast Guard planes from getting any closer. That's why a highly irregular situation has come up which must be resolved one way or another.

Investigation begins

I was saying that the way I came to suspect that something strange was going on reminded me of the time we discovered a traitor among us, so I told the minister of the interior: "We must investigate this matter." And an investigation was indeed started in mid-March; here's an important report on this.

The first task was assigned to counterintelligence radio, checking on all possible communications from Miami, from Colombia — planes, ships, etc. And what did counterintelligence discover? It's here in this report.

It says, among other things: "Starting on March 16, 1989, radiogoniometric bearings indicated that the 'fat' signal, frequently used over the Miami network and by ships, was fixed northwest of Havana close to the shore, drawing our priority attention.

"On the 27th of the same month, in his conversations with Miami, he said he couldn't carry out any more activities until after April 5.

"On March 27, 1989, he changed the 'fat' signal to '13.' I'm just reading certain paragraphs so that you get the idea.

"The first results indicated that the 'O' was located in City of Havana" — 'O' means the target — "west of Morro

Castle." Counterintelligence discovered that someone was sending radio signals.

"Following this finding there was a change in the target's conduct and the signals '35' and '20' appeared. There were constant changes in frequency and the contacts were very brief, which made the action of our mobile operational units difficult. Nevertheless, it was determined that the broadcasts were beamed from several places west of Havana, from the Almendares River to Barlovento, the likeliest places being: Barlovento, the zone between Fifth-A and Seventh-A avenues and 62nd and 66th streets, Miramar; the zone between Fifth-A and Seventh and 20th and 10th streets, Miramar; the Tritón Hotel.

"During this period they took more camouflaging measures regarding their communications.

"On April 23, 1989, radio contact was established between signals R-1, north of Matanzas, and R-2 in Florida, hinting at a drug air drop to be carried out and it was decided to dispatch our operation groups to Hicacos Peninsula.

"At 22:00 hours on that same day the air drop began, involving a plane codenamed *Tocayo*, which, according to the broadcast, dropped 25 packages near Cruz del Padre Cay. Around 05:00 hours the drop took place and one of our mobile units determined R-1 to be not further than 20 kilometers northeast of Hicacos Point.

"At 12:45 hours on April 24, 1989, another drug supply operation began in the same zone, this time coordinated by signal '130,' from Florida; signal '57,' designating the plane; and signal '125,' coming from the zone between Varadero and Cruz del Padre Cay."

The conclusion counterintelligence came to in the report was as follows:

"As for the information obtained through radio contacts and radiogoniometric bearings, it is obvious that the activities of 'fat' and remaining signals points to drug trafficking and, further, that the supplying is being done within the country or in the territorial waters of Cuba."

That's the conclusion counterintelligence came to in this report sent to the ministry on April 25, to which two other reports dated the 24th were added, each describing all these facts. Thanks to the means used by radio counterintelligence and the communications that were intercepted we had an idea of what was going on.

On April 27 a meeting at the highest levels of the Ministry of the Interior was held with all this information at hand, to investigate what was going on. That is, to proceed to capture some of these boats.

Tony de la Guardia at meeting

But what happened then? Present at the meeting of the 27th was Tony de la Guardia. He and his group had seen counterintelligence movements in Varadero, and then a meeting was held on the 27th to give instructions to different divisions on the matter. Tony de la Guardia was asked about the MC Department's communications, what type of communications they used, plus some other questions which, naturally, he answered cunningly to avoid any suspicion.

That radio intelligence was working accurately is shown by the fact that the broadcasting unit was indeed in the zone

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mentioned in the report, although it constantly changed position. At times they beamed from a boat off the coast. They didn't stay put in a given spot. It was in this zone that Amado Padrón's office was located. So steps were being taken that were already yielding important results. But the guilty people, of course, realized that an investigation was going on and immediately halted all the operations.

The question I ask myself is: Would we have discovered through that investigation what was going on and who was involved if the problem of Ochoa hadn't arisen? Because the actual truth is that the whole month of May had gone by quietly and it was already June and the investigation hadn't unearthed any concrete results.

We came to discover Tony de la Guardia's activities while we were investigating Ochoa's activities and we were very far from imagining that the two could be linked.

We acted as carefully as was necessary with Ochoa on the basis of the information we had gathered on moral questions, together with other reports we had received at different times. After collecting all the information, it became very evident that there were a series of irregular activities. It had

“We acted as carefully as was necessary with Ochoa . . .”

been previously decided to appoint him commander of the Western Army on his return from Angola. All this information and consideration made us postpone his appointment to this new position. We could not give him this responsibility without first clarifying some of these points.

We naturally had to be very careful about it.

When MINFAR informed me of all these activities, especially those of a moral nature, we realized that he had debased himself to such a degree that we naturally decided he could not be appointed commander of the Western Army.

Nevertheless, there remained the hope that in an in-depth discussion Ochoa would rectify it all. At that moment we were still taking into account all his merits, his rank, his position as Hero of the Republic of Cuba. We could very well imagine all the speculation in Cuba and abroad: the scandal that would result if problems suddenly arose which forced us to remove his medal, strip him of his rank, dismiss him from his post, discharge him from the armed forces, or imprison him. At that moment we knew nothing of the grave revelations which were to follow.

The investigation had to be carried out with great care because of the need to question various people. How were we to question some of his staff, some of the people working together with him, Martínez and others? They might detect that an investigation was under way. And if some of those moral revelations proved to be serious, then anything was possible, because moral degradation results in the collapse of ethical foundations. When these foundations give way, when the fundamental principles are lost, you can't trust anyone, because a revolutionary is revolutionary by virtue of certain principles, he is revolutionary by virtue of a certain ethic.

Nor were we going to arrest Ochoa to prevent him from escaping and then conduct investigations. This cannot be done and, as a rule, we don't do it with anyone. It must be said that military counterintelligence worked well and was very careful in collecting information without letting Ochoa suspect that he was the subject of an investigation.

Due to Ochoa's status as member of the Central Committee, authorization was required before conducting this type of investigation. In our country there are certain principles and standards to be upheld in the treatment of people. One cannot humiliate people by detaining them on the strength of rumors or snippets of information. This is not and cannot be the style of the revolution.

For us this became a headache on account of our previous experiences with people who become corrupt and then fly the coop to become heroes on the other side, parrots and magpies repeating anything fed to them by the imperialists. This was a tremendous problem during all those weeks, as Raúl mentioned.

First serious talk

We went on gathering information and decided to have the first serious talk with him. I think it was on May 29 that Raúl had this meeting with Ochoa that lasted three hours. Raúl had prepared a very detailed brief and talked about a whole series of things that had been confirmed up to that time. There were other things that were still unknown.

He was warned, and told why he would not be appointed; that certain things would have to be verified, but we were still expecting him to react, to cooperate, to give some sign of sincere concern, to tell the truth. In fact, he was very evasive during the whole conversation.

A few days went by. We knew that he was very depressed by the conversation, very upset. Then he reacted and a second conversation took place. That was on June 2. I thought that since he had asked to talk to the minister alone, he was going to tell the truth, he was going to be honest. The earlier meeting had been attended by three people: Raúl,

Furry, and Ulises [Gen. Ulises Rosales]. This time he asked for a private interview and I thought, well, he must have been ashamed to talk then and now, perhaps, he's going to open up.

By this time, even though we had evidence, we decided not to talk about the serious moral problems, because speaking to a man about such things could result in two things. One, that he would shoot himself if he found out that this had been revealed. We found it all so unpleasant that we did not want it discussed in his interview with Raúl. "Let's leave that aside, and talk about all the other things." It's almost impossible to come to an agreement with a man after telling him: "Listen, we know this." We only thought of approaching that problem indirectly, in the case of there being a sincere desire to rectify what he had been doing.

I must say that at that time, although we knew about a series of irregularities, we still knew nothing of the other more serious matters, for instance, the money in Panama — the account. We knew nothing about this, and with great care and astuteness we went on gathering evidence. From what we knew we kept thinking, "What shall we do?" "Shall we leave him in the army?" "What job can we give him?" "How will he react?"

We were still thinking of leaving him in the army, treating him generously, giving him a chance . . . all that during the first meeting, during the second.

I remember that the night before the second meeting I told Raúl — because a group of comrades met rather frequently to analyze this problem . . . few problems have been given as much attention as this one — "Ask him if he has an account abroad." I already believed, given the rest of the facts, that he must have an account abroad; and Raúl asked him, "Do you have an account abroad?" "Ah yes, a little money." "But just how much?" "No, just a trifle." That was his answer: "I don't remember; just a trifle."

No alternative but to arrest him

This took place — both conversations — between May 29 and June 2. Raúl, the top echelons of MINFAR and I had a very important meeting on June 11. It was a Sunday. I already knew that on Friday the MINFAR High Command — which was analyzing this problem — had come to the conclusion that Ochoa's activities were very serious, and that there was no alternative but to arrest him.

We had asked Polo to come to Cuba to report what he had been able to find out about Ochoa's activities and to give us his opinions about all this. The 11th was the day of the 14-hour meeting — if it was in fact just 14 hours that we met. The 11th was a very important day. That day we also saw some material that implicated "Comrade" Diocles Torralbas [the ex-transport minister], because they had close ties — not concerning drugs — but they were rather close, especially through the de la Guardia brothers.

It was precisely while we were investigating all this that we came across evidence of some of Mr. Diocles Torralbas' activities, because people were talking and saying, "This is going on and such and such is taking place." Often people make idle comments, but when we were checking Idalberto's house we found out that Diocles was living there and found evidence of some of his activities.

We had the proof, and the information also contained conclusive evidence of Ochoa's immoralities with the participation of Patricio de la Guardia.

We even found out about how a young woman, who had attended one of those parties, had been disguised as an internationalist fighter — a member of MININT — and taken to Luanda. She spent about a month over there and then returned. All this occurred in September 1988. We heard about it around February 1989. The woman began to speak of certain things: this was one of the leads that led to the discovery of more important things.

But June 11 was the decisive day. I had a meeting in my office with a group of comrades from MINFAR, including Comrade Polo, chief of our mission in Angola. By that time they were convinced of the course of action to be taken. I asked for more information. From my conversation with Polo I was able to appreciate important elements he had investigated and of which we knew nothing. Polo had even criticized Ochoa more than once for certain mistakes.

That very day we received information from military intelligence about some irregular handling of funds. We received specific information about the Panama account — expenditures charged to the Panama account — then I asked each comrade to give his opinion — just as we have done here today — and every one of those officers did so. We had to proceed immediately whatever the consequences.

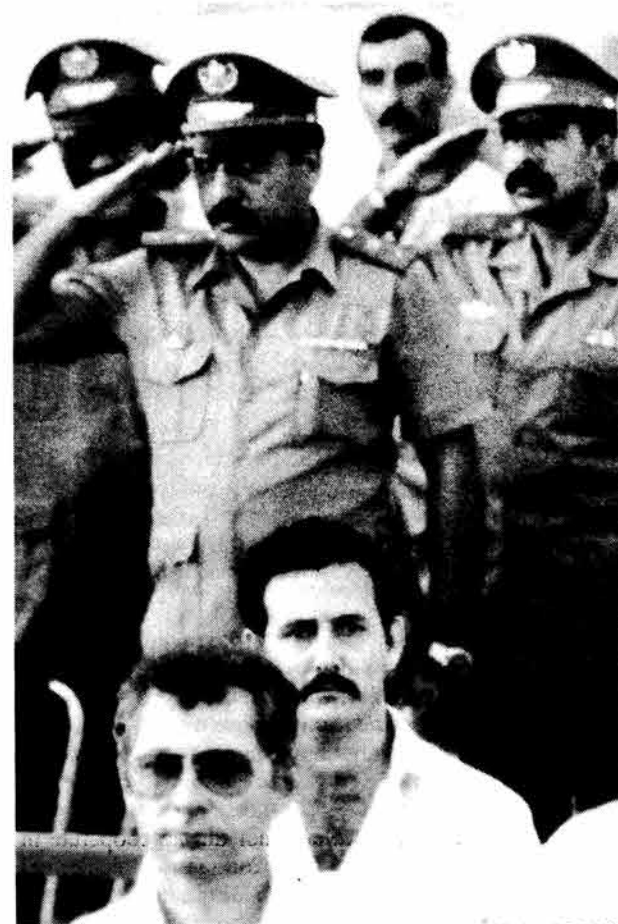
I held the same conviction, and it was unanimously agreed to arrest him. Strict surveillance had already been ordered, but complete control, total surveillance, 24 hours a day, is very difficult. Sometimes he would disappear for two hours . . . around the Santa Fe area . . . he might even take a boat . . . nobody could tell. The dealings in which Ochoa was implicated were already serious enough and it was unavoidable, there was no alternative, it was absolutely unavoidable to arrest him and bring him to trial for those activities.

We didn't imagine what was later found out

We knew that it was not an easy problem. We know what happens when you have to arrest and take a personality of

this kind to court. We knew the campaign that was about to begin, but we still decided to face that campaign. What we really could not even imagine . . . was what we, in fact, later found out. That astonished everyone, and it all started with a letter that did not deal specifically with it, but from which we could conclude that Martínez might be somehow linked to the drug traffic — a book on the mafia . . . a small card . . . something related to a hotel in Medellín, Colombia — that is how the drugs investigation began.

When Patricio and Tony de la Guardia were arrested, they were arrested for the Angola operations and for their collaboration with Ochoa in ivory and diamond traffic, for violating Cuban entry and exit regulations, and for other irregularities. That was the reason, because we saw that they were deeply involved not only in parties and other things, but also in criminal activities of this character. That's why



Militant/Selva Nebbia

Cuban officers at July 26, 1989, celebration marking the anniversary of 1953 attack on the Moncada fortress that opened the armed struggle to bring down the Batista regime.

both of them were arrested. Within a short time, in a different manner, while taking all the necessary precautions so that nobody would get away, we arrested them and began the inquiry.

They were arrested on the 12th. On the night of the 13th we were already following the main track to the drug question.

These are the elements which I can put forward to give the broadest possible idea; not only to you but to the whole population since this is being broadcast to the whole nation.

Now we have to draw the conclusions, to go directly to the issue that has brought us together, the issue concerning which, everything I have said so far, is intended to provide as much information as possible.

“Our decision concerns human lives, which cannot be made lightly . . .”

Our decision is undoubtedly important; it concerns human lives and it is a decision which cannot be made lightly. I am convinced that none of us will take it lightly and that we are all very much aware of the importance of this decision to be made by the authority vested in the Council of State by the Constitution of the Republic.

As has already been pointed out, we must take into account the future repercussions and impact of what we decide today.

Could Ochoa have saved himself?

Did Ochoa have the chance to save himself? I refer to Ochoa as he is the most outstanding personality in this case. Did he have the chance to save himself? Yes, in reality, Ochoa had the opportunity to save himself. I have thought a lot about this. He was given very real opportunities, several opportunities, at least. Ochoa could have saved himself during his first discussion with Raúl if he had been frank, sincere, if he had assumed his responsibilities, if he had told the truth.

Imagine if on that day, May 29, Ochoa would have told Raúl everything: what he had done, the operations, the

money, the bank account over there, what Tony de la Guardia and his group were doing, including his own activities. If he had returned the money . . . This would have been very important and would have merited consideration. Of course, from that moment on, Ochoa could no longer remain in the armed forces, but having cooperated, the decision to take the case to trial could have been argued against: take note! Even that could have been argued against. Because a man who comes forward, confesses, tells everything, and does the country the service of revealing the existence of a gang of drug traffickers, would have saved us from the surprise that awaited us. If the man had sincerely repented there might have been arguments against his execution and even against his being sent to prison.

I have asked myself many times, if he had done this, what corresponding action should have been taken against such a man? One would have had to take this all into careful

“ We have had to search, investigate, and work hard to uncover all of this without the cooperation of Ochoa . . .

consideration. It might have been possible to keep him out of prison, recover the money, learn all the facts. In reality, there was still a chance at this point in time. One would have had to consider his attitude carefully.

He had an opportunity on the second occasion that he spoke to Raúl. He, himself, stated that he had been on the verge of talking, but he did not dare, he lacked the moral fortitude to speak and, therefore, did not. This was the second opportunity.

He had a third opportunity on the day Raúl informed him of his arrest. He might have said: “Alright, look, let me speak and I will explain everything.” Or within a few hours of his arrest, or the following morning, he could have said: “I am going to cooperate, I will explain everything that I have done, all the atrocities that I have committed.” If he had spoken before anyone else, so that it would not have been necessary to uncover each act . . . then, yes, it would have been possible to save his life and impose the severest sanction other than the death sentence.

He did not adopt this attitude, nor did he cooperate in any way. We have had to search, investigate, and work hard in order to uncover all of this without the cooperation of Ochoa. This is the truth. Nor was he sincere, frank, or willing to talk when he was arrested. All of this had to be uncovered. We uncovered his involvement with drugs, his complicity with the de la Guardia gang; all the operations which had been carried out. We uncovered everything, or almost everything, for I believe we have uncovered most of the facts.

I am sure, comrades, that this is not the time and place to make it possible to avoid the most severe sentence.

He impressed us all in the Court of Honor. That does not mean that we changed our opinion, but he seemed to have been honest and courageous. Also, it pleased us to see him act that way, though — in my opinion — there was no turning back.

That attitude might have served to leave something for those closest to him. It could have helped leave some positive image amid that whole painful drama. However, by that time, in those circumstances, and at that moment, we had already been left with no alternative. We were in a situation without alternatives. But at least we did see one positive aspect of his declaration when he showed traces of those qualities which had once earned him the medals of a hero, his rank, and his membership in the Central Committee of the party, and which accounted for his position as a division general of the armed forces.

I believe that on that day he was sincere, on that day he had sincerely repented, I believe without a doubt that he was courageous. Our people admire courage and, above all, our people appreciated the contrast between the attitude of Ochoa in that Court of Honor and the attitude of the others: the attitude of those who had organized the mafia within the Ministry of the Interior, they appreciated it. Our people suffered, we all suffered a great deal over the testimony of the other officers of MINFAR.

For me particularly, it outraged, irritated, and hurt me to see how those men had destroyed their careers: men who had studied in academies, who had received their military rank for services rendered. I said to myself: If they had had a different commanding officer, these men would not have become corrupt.

This is by no means an excuse for one who commits a given error but it is, at least, something that might explain and perhaps even mitigate. But it was painful to see that situation.

It was a sad day for the Court of Honor when the many people involved in one way or another in this filth gave their testimony. It was also, I should say, a day of glory, when despite everything, the members of the Court of Honor spoke with true eloquence, with great strength and great pain, but also with great firmness.

However, Ochoa's attitude, as has been said here, I believe by Comrade Carlos [Rafael Rodríguez], influenced opinions. Of course, this could complicate the solution to the problem, not change it; but it could produce a contradiction between the decision of the Court of Honor, the decision of the Council of State, and the opinion held by the population.

I already expressed the firm belief that this could not be decided by a public opinion poll, or anything of the sort, even though it is something that must be analyzed from another angle, politically, to determine the complications that a given situation could bring about.

Ochoa was sincere in the Court of Honor, but not at the trial: he was changed, a different man, he was empty. He did not want to assume the full responsibility, he lied. He even went so far as to say that he knew nothing of the activities of Tony de la Guardia, when Tony de la Guardia discussed this subject frequently with him in Angola.

Tony de la Guardia made at least six trips to Angola during 1988 and on each occasion he conversed with Ochoa about this question, which had become an obsession for him. Martínez was frequently in contact with this group and Ochoa denied knowledge of the activities of Tony de la Guardia.

He said that he was already getting out of all that, that he was looking for a foreign friend to pass on all the contacts so that he could forget about it all, and that since he wanted to help the country he wanted the friend to deal with the big operations, and then invest the gains as foreign capital, the property of a foreigner, in tourism, as if the country needed this kind of money.

What the country needs are workers to build all that it can with the offers of capital that have come from sources that have nothing to do with drug trafficking, together with our own resources.

Both Martínez and Ochoa used the argument that the reason the account was opened in the name of a friend, and later changed, was because the friend might die. If we accept that a foreign friend may die and that, therefore, measures must be taken in the case of a \$200,000 account, I wonder whether a foreign friend might not die in the case of a \$20 million, \$50 million, \$500 million, or \$1 billion account.

There has been talk here about a foreign friend, but his name has not been mentioned. We have tried not to involve people who, although they are not enemies of our country, have, in our opinion, been railroaded. Because the foreign friend was not the one who put these ideas into Ochoa's head, but rather it was Ochoa who insisted to the foreign friend on the need to carry out these activities.

That is why we have been very careful with some names and we have not disclosed them. That is the only reason. But during the trial Ochoa talked about this bizarre idea and said that he did not want to have anything more to do with it. Nevertheless, there is evidence that during the first three months of 1989, Martínez went to Panama to contact his partners, his friends and to carry out his drug-trafficking plans.

Furthermore, up to April 1989 Ochoa insisted on this idea of large operations: a ship with 10 tons of drugs to be stationed to the north of Cuba and the drugs transhipped to speedboats. He even liked the idea — discussed twice — of setting up a laboratory to process drugs in Africa.

In fact he was less sincere, he was not as honest as in the Court of Honor.

I believe that a number of serious and solid arguments have been advanced here to explain why we have no alternative in this case.

Who would ever believe in the revolution again? Who would ever believe in the seriousness of the revolution if we actually did not apply the most severe sanctions established by our legislation for crimes of this gravity?

What is treason?

In fact, as has been stated, all these actions are elements of high treason. Because, what is treason? Treason is selling out the country, and they sold out the country. Treason is jeopardizing the country, and they seriously jeopardized the country. Treason is undermining the morale and the prestige of the revolution, and they have been involved in acts that undermine the morale and the prestige of the revolution, that weaken it in every sense.

In Cuba the revolution and the law stipulate capital punishment for spies. A CIA agent may be shot. And I ask myself: could a CIA agent have done as much harm as these gentlemen have done? A CIA agent can pass on information about the economy, information about anything, information on the military.

I ask myself: could 10 CIA agents have done the harm these people have done? Could 50 CIA agents do that much harm and endanger the country in the way they were endangering it? And CIA agents are brought to trial and shot according to the seriousness of their crimes.

Someone said that if we did not mete out exemplary punishment in this case, on whom would we mete it out? I wonder, how can we ensure discipline in our armed forces and the Ministry of the Interior if the commander of an army composed of tens of thousands of men can spare time from his duties to engage in this type of activity during wartime and in the middle of combat? What can we de-

mand of a military commander? What could we expect of future heroes or future commanders? Caudillos? Men who feel they are above the law and moral standards, above the country?

I believe that one of the things in which we can pride ourselves is the modesty of our officers and military commanders, the honesty of our officers and military commanders, their conduct. We had proof of this in the Court of Honor.

What could we tell future commanders, future heroes if a crime as serious as this one were not punished with the most severe sentence provided for in our legislation?

Our army is characterized by its discipline, its unconditional loyalty to the revolution, to the principles of the revolution and the party.

This is one of the things that gives us great satisfaction in our Revolutionary Armed Forces and our military commanders. We can say that considering the impudence with which Ochoa placed himself above the law because he was a hero, because he was a general, and because he was a member of the Central Committee, if this precedent went unpunished it would be fatal and demoralizing.

If we do not apply the most severe sentence to the others — to Martínez for what he did with full awareness — we would not be proving that there are certain actions that cannot be forgiven under the pretext of obeying orders.

If we do not punish the two principal culprits from the Ministry of the Interior, how are we going to reconstruct the Ministry of the Interior? How are we going to regain

“ How could we speak about rectification when the most unbelievable mockery of its principles was taking place . . .

the prestige of this institution so seriously damaged by these acts? How can we expect one day to achieve discipline in an institution so vital for the country, a country in revolution, a country 90 miles away from the United States?

How could we speak about rectification? Who would ever speak again of rectification when the most unbelievable mockery of the principles of the rectification process was taking place — as someone here said — precisely when we were waging that struggle. That was when they committed the worst atrocities; they laughed; they made fun of it!

Somebody recalled what was said on April 19, 1986. And when was it that these things took place? In 1987, 1988, 1989. What future could there be for the rectification process? Will a simple prison sentence be enough to constitute an example? Will it be enough to save and preserve the values we are protecting?

We must analyze the enormous damages inflicted upon the country in all senses. The political damage. You should see what the many dispatches and statements say, how they make allegations against the whole government, everyone included. You only have to see how they endangered the seriousness, the prestige, and the credibility of the revolution. This has already been noted here. We are going to recover all that and emerge stronger, not by virtue of the acts of the condemned but rather, in spite of what they did, and because of the way the country has dealt with it.

Many people around the world are amazed: some consider that we have given too much importance to this affair. The point is that in many parts of the world such events are of no importance whatsoever. Embezzlement, theft, indiscipline, impunity, and dirty business have no importance, they are everyday occurrences. But for us they do have

“ Considering the credibility and prestige of the revolution, I deem it necessary to apply exemplary punishment and the most severe sanction . . .

great significance and we have given them the importance they deserve. And, of course — as has already been said — we will transform this setback into a victory. But that will depend on the attitude adopted by the country, on the steps taken not only to apply sanctions, but following the sanctions. With this I am referring to the measures to be applied to all the potential perpetrators of this kind of behavior.

No, I do not think that the rectification process will suffer, it will benefit. Using the words of a common man, Raúl said: now the rectification process can indeed advance 10 years. I think that now it will be better understood and the party will have much more leverage to demand and

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impose standards, as well as to sweep away anything that smells rotten.

Therefore, considering precisely the credibility and prestige of the revolution, I deem it necessary to apply an exemplary punishment and the most severe sanction.

Aside from the other damage, they were drastically weakening our defenses. They were depriving us of our moral weapons, as has already been stated. They were presenting to the enemy, on a silver platter, the possibility of collecting evidence to discredit Cuba.

What would revolutionary Cuba be without international credibility? What would revolutionary Cuba be without prestige? What would revolutionary Cuba be without the morale to face the imperialist enemy, the enemy that harasses us so much, the enemy that tried to indict us on the question of human rights and was not able to achieve sanctions against our country precisely because of Cuba's morale, prestige, and credibility? And they attacked all of that.

Were they going to "help" the country, as they claimed, by collecting maybe 2 million a year, money that, furthermore, they put in their pockets, squandered, and used to corrupt everybody, to corrupt many people. Were they going to collect 2 million for that brilliant way of "helping" the revolution, something that not even they themselves believed for a single minute? And the country spends no less than 1 billion per year on defense, more than 1 billion on the Revolutionary Armed Forces alone.

Consider the cost of all the steel, the wood, the steel bars, all the material resources, all the equipment, the sweat, and the sacrifices we make to prepare the theater of operations

“**No, I don't think rectification will suffer, it will benefit . . .**”

and for the defense of the country, 1 billion! This means that the country spends over 500 times what these villains collected, and for 2 million they were jeopardizing the country's defenses, selling the country, risking the security of the country.

I have not counted the hundreds of millions the country spends on the Ministry of the Interior, both for domestic law enforcement and for the defense of the state's security: hundreds of millions! These villains were corrupting and discrediting the ministry for a few miserable dollars.

Damage to the economy

The damage to the economy. Who knows how much damage they have done to the country's economy? The prosecutor spoke about this in his summation. Varadero, what kind of reputation was Varadero to have in the world with the activities of this mafia?

A country that has one of its best potentials in tourism, one of its more immediate possibilities for obtaining the resources it needs, especially in convertible currency. Tourism that can yield 500 million, 800 million, 1 billion per year, much more than this drug traffic could produce in 100 years, and with their filthy drugs this mafia was dragging the prestige of the country through the mud, in the face of millions of potential tourists, for whom, among other things, the peace and security they can find in our country are precisely what they are looking for.

Who knows what damage they have inflicted on the country's legitimate and clean commercial activities? They have made a shambles, they have mingled different things, they have involved clean and legitimate activities that have nothing to do with them, in their business.

Someday we will be able to assess the amount of damage inflicted on the country's legitimate activities, honest commercial activities which are morally impeccable, as well as how much damage may have been suffered by our enterprises abroad.

And the damage they have done to the Ministry of the Interior is enormous. We could almost say that they have morally destroyed the Ministry of the Interior. We must reconstruct it, we must make it anew.

We must admit that the responsibility is not exclusively theirs. That is the truth. We must say — and it is necessary to say it now — that the leadership of the Ministry of the Interior is also responsible, because of its insensibility towards the conduct of some of these men who, as everybody knew, lived like tycoons, spent money, showed off, and led a life that was different from that of everyone else.

It is incredible to hear in a trial that a man who was an MC officer had 10 cars. It is almost certain that all of you who are present here have heard something at one time or another about that "gentleman," Amado Padrón: that you have heard something at some time, here or there. Everybody has talked about the de la Guardia brothers, about their life and conduct. The ministry was insensible to this, in spite of the efforts we have made in that institution, in spite of the guidelines established.

The ministry was told, among other things — and it was

so stated in the report to the Third Congress — that they had to be untamished because they are the ones that have to demand respect for the law and a correct behavior from others, the ones that have to clash in the streets with robbery, misappropriation, and squandering.

It was established that there should be no clinics exclusively for the members of the Ministry of the Interior, because that would distance them from the people, and that they should go to the clinics used by the rest of the population. There already was one in Pinar del Río, and another in some other province, and yet one more. "Give them back!" It was established that they should not build exclusive restaurants or recreation centers, which were already being developed in some places, and to that effect we said: "Give them back. Give all that to the people."

There were military stores, about which we received complaints, and we said: "Close the military stores." Because one of the serious problems in the Ministry of the Interior was the attempt to be the same as the armed forces, whose tasks, missions, and functions are different.

And do not think that we did not take many measures, precisely to prevent the ministry from distancing itself from the people.

I spoke about this a number of times. Yes, because I knew about some parties that had cost thousands of pesos. They asked me: "What shall we do with the one responsible for this?" I answered: "I don't want a scapegoat, what I want is that this should never happen again." And, unfortunately, it was not so. This gang corrupted people, this gang gave many presents, and not just trifles — as the people call them — and they had been doing so for some time.

Should never have been in MC Dept.

Why were Tony de la Guardia and all that group removed from the CIMEX corporation? Precisely because they had adopted a certain style: they imported every type of trinket they ran across, from white-wall tires, glasses of one kind, telephones of another, tape recorders, cassette players for cars, all those things. They were removed. Those people should never have been placed in the MC Department, given the prerogatives they could exercise, and much less have been authorized to organize transnational corporations with the pretext of breaking the blockade. That was prohibited, that was done in violation of definite and specific instructions given to the ministry.

A small group of discredited people found themselves with all kinds of resources at their disposal.

And I tell you that they were not only giving away trifles, not only color TV sets and videocassette players, but even yachts worth tens of thousands of dollars, which had either been stolen or, in complicity with the speedboat crews, were reported lost while the owners gladly collected the insurance. These yachts were sold or resold for tourism or given away as presents.

We would have to see how many persons received presents from this gang, because little by little they created a whole system of relations and friends. They gradually corrupted and, in my opinion, neutralized people, and this has greatly damaged the Ministry of the Interior. Despite the functions of outstanding importance that this institution must carry out, today a climate of bitterness prevails within it. This is not the moment to forget the remarkable services rendered to the revolution by the men and women of the Ministry of the Interior in these past 30 years; services that the country needed yesterday, needs now, and will go on needing until who knows when. This is no time to forget the heroism, courage, and sacrifices of so many members of the Ministry of the Interior, nor the innumerable services they rendered to the country, particularly the State Security members. Nor should we forget the past and present services rendered to the country by the firemen and the National Police.

As expressed at the trial, it will be difficult and will take a long time to recover the confidence and rebuild the capacity of some of the Ministry of the Interior agencies; but we will recover them, without any doubt.

Attendant on this sad case, some people have made certain comparisons between the positions of the FAR and the Ministry of the Interior, and I say that that is very unfair and we should repeat this wherever necessary: there is no possible comparison between the roles played by one institution and the other.

The Ministry of the Interior was born of the Rebel Army, the Ministry of the Interior was born of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, the Ministry of the Interior is a scion of the Rebel Army. We should place each institution in its historical context and assign to each the right measure of responsibility. It is precisely at this moment that the Revolutionary Armed Forces must again help the Ministry of the Interior.

And I say that this comparison is unfair because — and I say it wholeheartedly — if an institution has been demanding in this country, if an institution has upheld standards, if there is an institution which has been educational par excellence, that institution is the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. If any comrade can be said to have struggled and been demanding, that comrade is Raúl.

That is why we must indignantly reject the enemy's suggestions that if there were changes in the Ministry of the

Interior there must also be changes in the Revolutionary Armed Forces. That is a play by the enemy. If we have been able to discover this cancer, it was precisely thanks to the Revolutionary Armed Forces. If today we have many cad-

“**Our party and Revolutionary Armed Forces are two essential, fundamental institutions of our revolution . . .**”

res with which to help the Ministry of the Interior, they are the cadres trained in the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

Our party and our Revolutionary Armed Forces are two essential, fundamental, and basic institutions of our revolution, with different problems and of different natures.

In the armed forces there was no mafia, there were really only two men involved in these activities, and this is the moment to tell all and tell it straight.

The time devoted to this problem

How much time have we had in these days to devote to this problem? How much time have Raúl and I had to devote to it? Where was I, what was I doing? I was visiting the different construction projects, I was visiting places of economic and social importance, making a great effort in all these fields through the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers, promoting many projects, including the transportation situation in Havana, which was around 25,000 trips a day and is now close to 30,000.

I would have preferred not to speak about this, because I had decided not to mention the outcome of the work being done in Havana's transportation system until it was fully consolidated. We were devoted to the construction of bus terminals and produce centers; to the improvement of the productive and constructive capacity of the Ministry of Construction; to the radical change and eradication of old, negative habits which had taken root in that institution; to the recovery of our waterworks momentum; to the promotion of the construction of dozens of reservoirs; to the acceleration of the soil drainage plans in sugarcane plantations; to the creation of engineering systems in rice plantations; to an ambitious dairy, hog, and poultry farm construction program; and to increasing the production of vegetables.

We were all devoted to increasing our country's food production capacity, to solving very important problems in all fields; to inaugurating hospitals, day-care centers, and polyclinics; to fostering plans and programs in all areas of health, education, industry, agriculture, construction; to organizing construction contingents, which have already reached a productivity unmatched by any other productive force in any other country, working more hours than in any other place; to dealing with our underdevelopment, our difficulties in the most trying moments, when we have less hard currency reserves, when we have begun to face real difficulties even with supplies which had been guaranteed for nearly 30 years, coming from socialist countries, and which are no longer guaranteed due to the changes and reforms that they have introduced and which make it more difficult for them to comply with the supplies agreed upon for each year. In these difficult conditions, we were all devoted to our work.

We have been drawn away from that work, compelled to neglect it for almost a month. We have had to cancel three meetings of the Executive Committee, to totally devote ourselves to this problem because of the importance we consider it to have.

I had thought that this year I could devote more time and effort to these tasks than last year since — as I have already mentioned — from mid-November 1987 to October 1988, I had to dedicate almost all my time to the war in Angola, and considerable time to the final negotiations.

When we had finally achieved peace there, when our fighters were returning victorious and full of merits; when we were trying to intensify the ideological battle; when we had created a work effervescence throughout the country,

“**The revolution is something serious and knows how to deal with these problems as they should be dealt with . . .**”

an enormous work effervescence; when we were all devoted to preparing the people for the defense of the country, we were compelled to set everything aside to dedicate our time to these gentlemen, to these "playboys" who had been enjoying the good life.

I mentioned the construction contingents; it is shameful that these people were indulging in that sort of activity, enjoying that sort of life, while others devote 14, 15, 16



Militant/Selva Nebbia

Minibrigade from Ministry of Telecommunications building housing in Havana. Cuba's workers and farmers carry out long hours of voluntary work "performing a real miracle in these crucial times for socialism," Castro said.

hours a day to transforming our country, to developing it, performing a real miracle, in these crucial times for socialism, at a time — as was already mentioned here — when socialism itself is questioned, when attempts are being made to cast doubt on socialism and send it to the trash heap of history.

While our country and our process — which is not only a model of honesty, seriousness, and truth, but which also tries to follow its own path, its own form of building socialism — while here, 90 miles from the empire, prouder, more confident, and surer of ourselves than ever, we were raising the banners of socialism, this group of irresponsible individuals were threatening us with a terrible stigma, threatening to sink us into the mire and into discredit. But the revolution is something serious. It always was, is, and always will be, and the revolution knows how to deal with these problems as they should be dealt with.

Two different worlds

What do the lives of these gentlemen have to do with the life of a worker, the customs of these gentlemen with the customs of our working class? They are two different worlds. We cannot rest until there is one single world here; not the world of the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, but the world of our workers, our working class, our proletariat, our farmers.

Our workers do not go around thinking about cheap junk, about pennies, or about luxuries. I have not seen that attitude in any of those men that I admire so much, the men that get up at sunrise and are still working at 10:00 and 11:00 at night.

I remember a precedent that occurred in the Sierra Maestra. We were still just barely two columns, we had made the enormous trip towards the east and, still very far from the La Plata zone, we received news that there had been an outbreak of banditry among members of the 26th of July Movement in that area, among some isolated fighters. They had held up a store and committed several crimes, and that worried us extraordinarily. We said: This is not possible; if we tolerate this, if this spreads, it could mean the discredit and the death of the revolution.

We walked for endless hours, for days on end, we carried out forced marches, we sent Camilo [Cienfuegos] on in the vanguard to arrest all those involved, and we were able to arrest the principal culprits. How painful it was to try them, because some had been our guides, had helped us, had brought us food during the most difficult moments. However, the distance from the main troops, the hot-headedness of some, and irresponsibility, led them to commit actions that, under those circumstances, were extremely serious, crimes of robbery and assault, and we were forced to put them on trial. We tried them and sentenced them to the maximum penalty . . . and we executed them!

I remember that and it still hurts! Those humble comrades of ours, some who had several brothers among our troops, those brothers stayed with us in the column. Just imagine how difficult it was.

I remember the one they called "the teacher," who went around posing as a teacher, and did us several services. And one day we received news that he was molesting women

while passing himself off as Che in the role of doctor. He arrived under arrest, was tried by the same court and immediately shot. And we were not trigger-happy. We could write an account of the people our victorious army executed during the war, and they were very few. I do not believe that any other revolution at war in the world has executed so few people.

And what crimes were committed by these . . . ? I dare to call them comrades because at that point the revolution was not as developed as it is today, did not have the standards that it does today, did not have all that we have today; they made a mistake that under other circumstances would not have been so serious, but under those circumstances was extremely serious, and we had no alternative but to apply the maximum penalty, so that the mistakes would not be repeated. And they were not.

What are the things that those fighters did compared to the things that these gentlemen have done, the things that Ochoa, de la Guardia, and his group have done? What are they? How serious were those things compared to these? And today they place us in exactly the same dilemma: these things are so serious, and crimes of this sort are such a great threat to the future of the revolution, that we have no other choice but to apply the most severe punishment, the exemplary punishment.

Different world personalities have addressed us expressing their concern, asking us, urging us not to apply the death penalty in the case of the accused.

Of course, we have also received messages from the relatives, and this is probably the hardest thing of all — Raúl referred to this very emotionally — when the chil-

“History has never witnessed a cleaner trial . . .”

dren, the brothers and sisters, the parents, pleaded with us not to apply the maximum penalty, and that the Council of State commute the sentence. It is very hard, very hard.

It is difficult for them to understand that what they are asking all of us, not only me . . . There are many who believe that I am the one to decide what it is to be done in this case, and I will tell you frankly: I am not shunning any responsibility and if I were the only one to decide on this, if it were a power of the president of the Council of State, I would adopt exactly the same decision. This is not a case of avoiding responsibilities.

This is a collective decision. The world does not even know that: they believe that it is the prerogative of the president of the country to pardon. Everyone abroad says: Now Castro will have to decide one way or the other. In our country many people think that the decision is mine personally.

Really, these relatives, these loved ones, the children, the family are asking us, and it's logical that they do so; but they are asking us for something that is beyond our prerogatives; they are asking us for something that is beyond our duties.

Some cases, some precedents have been mentioned, and there were moments when the revolution could be, and was, generous without hurting itself.

Today, the revolution cannot be generous without really hurting itself. The revolution, always noble and generous, will never discriminate against the children of the culprits, and for these innocent people we also suffer. As Raúl said, thinking of them one day, he wept.

Comrades, to sum up, I believe that history has never witnessed a cleaner trial. When I say history, I can refer to any history. And when I speak of our country, I say that there was never a cleaner trial or one with greater participation.

I already explained the whole trial, and how not even the slightest influence was brought to bear on the decisions made by the judges, the courts, the witnesses, the accused, or anyone else.

And I will say more: even though it is up to us to make the final decision here in the Council of State, practically every comrade with important functions in the leadership of the country was consulted. To begin with, I asked the opinion, one by one, of the members of the Political Bureau, and the answer of each one of the members of the Political Bureau — it was not one by one personally, but in a meeting — was unanimous in that the most severe penalty be applied to the main culprits in these acts.

Afterwards, I asked the opinion of the members of the Executive Committee and the Council of Ministers, one by one, and only two believed that we should not apply the most severe penalties, giving different reasons.

We consulted the members of the Central Committee and of the 162 present, 10 argued against applying the most severe penalties; they analyzed it and presented different reasons, different arguments; 11 expressed their support for whatever the Council of State decided, with full knowledge of all the evidence; and 141 expressed their opinion that the most severe penalties should be applied.

I should point out that all this was not done in one day, it was done at various stages of the proceedings, which explains why there were different opinions, which pleases us.

With the proceedings over and the Special Court's sentence made public, we requested that all deputies to the National Assembly — our highest body since we are representatives of the National Assembly — be convened by province, and of the 402 present, the sum total of all those who met in each of the provinces, only one person spoke out in favor of commuting the sentence and 401 deputies voted for ratification of the sentence by the Council of State.

And not only this, many also expressed the opinion that more of the accused should have been sentenced to capital punishment. Many deputies were of this opinion. Some even complained about the sentence having been reduced to 10 years for one of the defendants instead of the 15 years requested by the prosecution.

Military Court was generous

I believe that the Military Court was generous. I believe that most of the defendants could have been sentenced to the death penalty. But I also believe that the court made a just decision. We might add that it was a wise decision. It is better that people complain that it was not severe enough than that they complain that it was too drastic. But I believe that it was very wise, because I think that our courts have issued a warning, quite simply, and that, without a doubt, if actions of this type were to occur again, the measures would be much more drastic.

It's hard when we think that some men will die as a result of all this, and as a result of our own decision. It is hard, yes, and it is bitter. It cannot be pleasant for any of us. But I think, most of all, of others that died.

I think of those that fell to make this a decent country. And not only those that fell in these times, but also those that fell over the last 120 years to build a republic where justice and law would prevail, a republic where there would be no corruption, no impunity, no dishonesty; a republic without corruption, misappropriation, or treason. I think of those who fell for a dignified and respectable country, those that fell in two wars of independence, and have fallen throughout this century, of so many valuable comrades. . . . I think of them!

I also think of their loved ones. I think of those who have died while fulfilling internationalist missions, honorable internationalist missions . . . and it is in their name that we have no other choice but to do as we are doing. It is in the name of the ideals they defended and the country they dreamed of, that we are compelled to be severe.

Thus, comrades, after having extensively expressed my points of view, I adhere to the opinion expressed by all of you this afternoon.

Nevertheless, although we have heard the opinions, I request that we have a formal vote.

Those who agree with the ratification of the sentence handed down by the Military Court, raise your hands.

Those against.

The Council of State unanimously ratifies the sentence handed down by the Special Military Court.

The session is adjourned.

Camagüey Province: 'a model for Third World development'

BY SELVA NEBBIA

CAMAGÜEY, Cuba — Just over two years ago, explained Cuban President Fidel Castro here on July 26, "we set ourselves the task of making the province of Camagüey a model of development in food production as well as in social development for the Third World."

"If the people of Camagüey can feel satisfied," Castro said, "with what they have built over the past 30 years of revolution with their own hands and with their revolutionary spirit, I believe that they can feel more satisfied still by what they are creating right now and with what is being projected for the future."

Camagüey is in the heart of the dairy and cattle ranching area of Cuba, and is also a center of sugar cane production. Painted on many of the billboards of this provincial capital were the slogans, "All the projects have been met for the 26th." On July 25 Castro visited some of these projects and met with the people involved in them.

His first stop was Comunidad Nicaragua, on the outskirts of the city of Camagüey. This community was built to house 300 families, mainly dairy workers from the area, in two- and three-bedroom apartments.

Comunidad Nicaragua includes a day-care center, elementary school, library, cultural and sports center, and clothing and food stores. The housing project also has an apartment-clinic for a family doctor.

The community, which was built by a work

force of 300 in only 11 months, will be inhabited by this month. "This has been a tremendous achievement," explained Rodolfo Santiago, the head of the construction effort. "Most of the workers who will be moving in to this community have been living under very bad conditions and far from their workplace. Comunidad Nicaragua now changes all this."

Speaking about his tour of Comunidad Nicaragua, Castro explained in his speech the next day that these integrated communities were planned as part of the development of the area as a whole.

Before the revolution, explained Castro, the economy of the province depended almost entirely on sugar plantations. Today the province has a growing chemical industry, as well as an energy industry and rice production. Sugar production has been fully mechanized.

On the outskirts of the city of Camagüey, Castro pointed out, "We are implementing the world's largest milk program."

The project will have 540 dairy farms, and hundreds of other facilities needed for a dairy farming group, including calf-breeding areas, centers for the heifers that will replace producing cows, and centers for breeding bulls.

"There is nothing similar anywhere else," Castro added. This dairy project is an example for the Third World, he explained, "I should add that it is also an example of cattle development for any First World country."



Militant/Selva Nebbia

Fidel Castro talks with workers of Comunidad Nicaragua

The Cuban president also cited the gains made in education, health, and culture in the province. The infant mortality rate, for example, which during the first year of the revolution was greater than 60 for every 1,000 live births, has dropped to 11 for every 1,000 live births.

The province has many educational facilities, including a recently completed medical school with a potential enrollment of almost 3,000 students, 21 university preparatory schools in the rural areas, and 62 part-time boarding schools with an enrollment of 36,000 students. Of every 200 adults, 35 go to school. Among the children there is almost 100 percent school enrollment and approximately 97 percent stay in school.

"We are planning great programs in agriculture and other fields," said Castro on July

26. "We carefully studied how to implement those programs. We discussed how to develop agriculture as part of an integral plan."

"We had begun to do just that in the first few years of the revolution," the Cuban leader continued, "but then neglected to do that, because theorists peddled the crazy idea of playing around with capitalist mechanisms here. As a result of this, even ghost towns appeared. These ghost towns had buildings under construction but no streets; where there were streets, there was no sewage system."

However, said Castro referring to Comunidad Nicaragua, this is "not a ghost town. This community has its buildings, streets, potable water."

"This is an integrated community, and this is not the only one under construction" in Camagüey, Castro added.

Fidel Castro: 'We will not sugarcoat the truth'

Continued from front page

the members of the Communist Party, the Union of Young Communists, the unions and other mass organizations, and government bodies.

Participants in volunteer brigades have been working at "clearing the sugar-cane fields, working the harvest, building, working with their hands," Castro reported. This, he said, is leading by example.

"And this is the really revolutionary, really socialist road," he added, along which the people can accomplish anything they set out to do.

World context of Ochoa case

The July 26 celebration came less than two weeks following the execution of Gen. Arnaldo Ochoa Sánchez and three others convicted by a court-martial on charges of high treason and drug trafficking. In a speech to the Council of State July 9, Castro had spoken extensively on the Ochoa case and its crucial significance for the rectification process.

The conviction and execution of Ochoa and the others did not mark an end to the arrests and trials of high government and party officials accused of corruption or tolerating corrupt practices. On July 31 the Cuban Communist Party daily *Granma* reported the arrest of Gen. José Abrantes Fernández and four other former top officials of the Ministry of the Interior. Abrantes had been removed as interior minister at the end of June, following the disclosure of the existence of a virtual Mafia operating within the ministry.

At the July 26 rally, Castro made no explicit reference to the arrests or trials. What he offered instead was an explanation of the international framework in which they have unfolded, a "historic moment" that poses new challenges and new responsibilities for the Cuban revolution and its leadership.

"There are difficulties in the world revolutionary movement," Fidel said. "There are difficulties in the socialist movement. We can't even say for sure that supplies from the socialist camp, which have arrived like clockwork in our country for the last 30 years, will keep on coming with such certainty and in such a punctual way."

In response to recent developments in Poland, Hungary, the Soviet Union, and other countries, Castro went on, the imperialist powers, and in particular the United States,

are riding a wave of "euphoria" and "triumphalism" that poses a deadly danger to Cuba and to the world revolution.

"Never has any administration, not even the Reagan administration, taken such a triumphalist stance," he said. "Based on the difficulties in the socialist camp, but fundamentally in some of the socialist countries, the Bush administration has in recent months been making speeches that begin from the premise that the socialist community is in decline, that socialism is in decline, and that socialism is going to end up in the dustbin of history — the very place the brilliant strategists and creators of the socialist movement reserved for capitalism."

This imperialist "triumphalism" means an increasingly aggressive stance toward Cuba, Castro stressed. "If Mr. Bush begins from the premise that socialism is in decline, that the socialist community is going to disintegrate, what stance will he take toward Cuba — this firm, courageous, and heroic Cuba that neither surrenders nor sells out? If he begins from this premise, why change policy toward Cuba?"

"Bush carries out a policy of peace with the big countries and of war against the small progressive peoples. He carries out a policy based on the premise that if socialism is disintegrating, Cuba won't be able to resist, and the Cuban revolution will disappear. And this reasoning heightens the Yankee imperialists' aggressive attitude and hostility toward our people, our revolution, and our homeland."

"These are truths. That is why we now see the empire more insolent than ever, more criminal than ever, more threatening than ever."

Peaceful transition to capitalism?

Bush's recent tour of Poland and Hungary, Castro explained, was part of this imperialist offensive. "Bush didn't pay a visit just because he liked the idea of seeing those countries. He went to lend encouragement to the capitalist tendencies that are developing there, the political problems that are arising there."

"It will be the work of future historians and students," the Cuban president added, "to delve into the causes of these problems. I have my own ideas about this, but this isn't the time to raise them."

In the recent elections in Poland, Castro said, "the liberal opposition — the pro-

capitalist, or at least antisocialist opposition, which still hasn't fully defined itself and its intentions — won nearly 100 percent of the seats in the Senate." In Hungary, he added, "something similar happened. Just yesterday they had an election for four seats in parliament. The opposition won three of them by a wide margin."

"What are we seeing here? A peaceful transition from socialism to capitalism?" Fidel asked. "That's possible. And if so, we don't challenge it. We defend each country's and each party's sacred right to independence. That is what we demand for all peoples of the world," he added.

"I think many mistakes have been made, producing these problems. At times I wonder if it might not be better if these new generations that were born under socialism in Poland and Hungary made a little journey through capitalism, so that they would learn about capitalism, about the selfishness, brutality, and dehumanization that marks capitalist society. This is a very delicate matter, but these are my most sincere thoughts on the question."

"During Mr. Bush's triumphal tour they say a crowd greeted him in Gdansk, a city in Poland. According to the major U.S. news agencies, there were many hand-painted signs in the crowd — I myself can't say if there were many or few because I wasn't there, I didn't see it on television, I just read about it in the newspaper reports."

"They said that many of the placards read: 'The best communist is a dead communist.' So we note the fascist content, the clearly fascist content, that marked the placards that greeted Bush in that Polish city."

"Of course," Fidel added, to a rising roar of applause and shouts, "there are two kinds of communists, those who let themselves be killed easily and those of us who don't let ourselves be killed easily!"

A historic moment

"Naturally, the greatest illusions of imperialism and Bush stem from the difficulties encountered by the Soviet Union, the fundamental bulwark of the socialist community. It is true that the Soviet Union is experiencing difficulties. This is no secret to anyone. And it is the dream of imperialists that the Soviet Union will disintegrate."

It is in this "historic moment that the world is living through today," Castro said, that "we have to think things over. We have to ask

ourselves: Are we going to stop our march forward? Are we going to stop this colossal effort? No! Never!

"Are we going to close our eyes to reality? No! Never! Are we going to bury our heads in the sand like ostriches? No! Never!"

But, Fidel added, "we have to speak up. We have to warn imperialism not to harbor such illusions about our revolution, about the idea that our revolution cannot stand firm if there is a debacle in the socialist community."

"Because if tomorrow or some other day we wake up to the news that a great civil conflict has broken out in the Soviet Union, or even if we awaken to the news that the Soviet Union has disintegrated — something we hope will never happen — even in these circumstances, Cuba and the Cuban revolution will continue fighting and continue resisting." This was met with a thunderous ovation.

"Cuba and the Cuban revolution will stand firm," Castro went on. "What I say I say calmly, serenely, and with all the cold bloodedness in the world. This is the time to speak clearly to the imperialists. It is the time to speak clearly to the world. We are not joking."

Castro then reminded the Cuban people of the so-called missile crisis in October 1962. At that time, without consulting the Cuban leadership, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev reached an agreement with U.S. President John Kennedy to remove Soviet missiles from Cuba.

"Historians are collecting papers and presenting their versions" of this crisis, Castro said, adding that "we still haven't given ours."

"Yes, we took part in a gathering in Moscow where there were some people from the United States, personalities from that period; Soviets; and a few Cubans. We haven't given our version yet, nor have we published our notes, although we too have notes."

"There is one thing that is clear. We lived through that experience, and I don't remember seeing one single Cuban vacillate. The Cubans resisted any concession to imperialism. The Cubans of that generation — a great portion of whom are still alive, to which have been added new generations, very well educated, with great political consciousness — were ready to die without the slightest hesitation! To die rather than take a step backward! To die rather than give in!" This, too, was met with sustained applause and chants.

Continued on Page 24

Coffee cartel suspends export quotas

Prices plunge; some Third World producers profit, others hit hard

BY SUSAN LaMONT

The International Coffee Organization, meeting in London on July 3, suspended export quotas for member countries after failing to reach agreement on new quotas.

With limits lifted on the amount of coffee that producing countries can sell on the world market, coffee prices — already in a slump — began to plunge. By July 27 they had fallen to the lowest levels in more than 13 years on New York's Coffee, Sugar and Cocoa Exchange, dropping by more than 25 percent after July 3.

By mid-July, prices had fallen to one-third of peak 1986 levels, with coffee from Brazil, Central America, and Mexico selling for about 77 cents a pound. Under the expired quotas, it would have sold for 115 to 145 cents a pound.

By the end of the month, Brazilian and Mexican coffee was selling for 73.5 cents a pound, Indonesian coffee for 49 cents, and Philippine coffee for 39 cents.

The elimination of coffee quotas has forced coffee-producing countries to try to sell as much coffee as possible in an effort to make up for declining prices by increasing their market share.

For countries in Latin America and Africa that depend most heavily on coffee for export income, the drop in prices will further deepen the economic catastrophe they already face and make the weight of their foreign debt even more crushing.

The suspension of the coffee quotas could mean \$2 to \$3 billion in lost export earnings per year for producing countries, estimates Onusu Akote, spokesperson for the International Coffee Organization (ICO).

"For Third World producers... the coffee-price slump will worsen debt, economic, social and political problems," he said. "As the second-largest commodity market after oil, coffee is vital for many indebted Third World producers."

Int'l Coffee Organization

Formed in 1962, the ICO has 74 members: 50 coffee-producing countries and 24 coffee-purchasing countries.

Like other international commodity agreements covering sugar, cocoa, tin, and rubber, the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) is essentially a cartel aimed at regulating prices by controlling the amount of coffee on the world market through quotas. In theory — since both producing and buying countries are in on the agreement — the quotas act to keep prices from rising too high, and hurting "consumers" or falling too low and harming producers.

Under the ICA, exporting countries have a quota of bags of coffee per year they can sell, with a target price range per pound. If prices exceed the target price, more coffee can be shipped in order to lower prices.

Among the main coffee-producing countries are Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, Uganda, Ivory Coast, and Kenya.

Brazil, the world's largest coffee producer, had \$2.36 billion in coffee exports in 1988. This represented 7 percent of Brazil's total export earnings.

For other countries, coffee comprises a much higher percentage of exports.

Disagreements over quotas

The U.S. market consumes 25 percent of world coffee exports, making Washington the most powerful member of the ICO.

Before the latest meeting, pressure had been mounting to change previously set ICO quotas. The United States, most Central American countries, and Mexico were pressing for redistribution of quotas among ICO members. They urged higher quotas for producers of mild arabica coffee, mainly Central American countries.

Other countries refused to go along with the changes, including African countries producing robusta coffee, Brazil, and Colombia. The European Community also opposed the changes. Instead they proposed extending

existing quotas to give more time to work out a new agreement. When the ICO met, neither proposal was adopted, and quotas were lifted immediately.

Washington had already decided that the ICA "had grown outdated... when basic changes weren't forthcoming," wrote Robert Samuelson in the July 26 *Washington Post*. "The United States decided not to renew the ICA. That doomed the agreement."

Nicaraguan Economy Minister Luis Carrión also stated that Washington's support for the proposal to raise Central American countries' quotas "didn't have a chance of being approved." The U.S. government supported it in order to split the vote and destroy the agreement, he said.

This is not the first time the ICO has suspended coffee quotas. They were also lifted between 1972 and 1980, and in 1986 and 1987.

Growing debt, stiffer competition

The inability to maintain the coffee cartel results from growing competition among the capitalist countries of Latin America, Asia, and Africa — competition that occurs in the context of growing pressures from the debt crisis.

Third World countries with stronger, more diversified economies — such as Brazil — are in a better position to benefit, at least temporarily, from the lifting of quotas in coffee than countries with weaker economies that are more dependent on one or two com-

modities to earn export income, such as Nicaragua and Uganda.

During the latest round of ICO discussions, some coffee-dependent countries had unsuccessfully argued that Brazil should give up part of its quota, which is 30 percent of the total. Because coffee represents only 7 percent of Brazil's exports, they said, it was in a position to let other countries have a greater market share.

Brazil refused. "People say that if coffee is not important to Brazil and it is important to other countries, then why doesn't Brazil give up its quota?" responded Brazilian Coffee Institute President Jorio Dauster. "That's ridiculous." Brazil's foreign debt of \$123.9 billion is the largest of any Third World country.

Coffee growers and government officials in Brazil, Guatemala, and Costa Rica say they will be able to sell more of their high-quality coffee without quotas. According to Mario René Ortiz, general manager of Guatemala's national association of coffee growers, ICO quotas had kept exporters in that country from selling 50 percent of the coffee crop. The new drop in prices, they say, will be made up for by increased sales and lower costs for warehousing and storage.

Plummeting commodities prices

Coffee-producing countries of Latin America, Africa, and Asia are caught between the pincers of spiraling debt and plummeting commodities prices.

To try to pay the ever-mounting debt to banks in New York, Tokyo, Paris, London, and other imperialist centers, these countries have to produce more coffee, sugar, cocoa, and other commodities, in addition to trying to increase exports of manufactured goods.

At the same time, they receive less and less for what they are able to produce. According to a World Bank report, after adjusting for inflation, 1986 prices of raw materials (excluding oil) on the world market were at their lowest level since the late 1930s. The modest upturn in some commodity prices in the first half of 1988 did not mark a reversal of this long-term downward drift.

This in turn means increased competition between the imperialist-dominated countries for greater shares of the market in agricultural products and other raw materials.

Food monopolies

The coffee-growing capitalists of Brazil won't be the only ones to benefit from the ICA's breakdown.

The U.S. coffee market is dominated by three food companies that control 80 percent of retail sales: General Foods, which sells Maxwell House and Sanka coffee; Procter & Gamble, which markets Folgers; and Nestlé, which sells Nescafé and Hills Brothers.

These and other giant food monopolies, whose profits from coffee will soar, will also be the chief beneficiaries of the collapse in coffee prices.

Nicaraguan economy dealt big blow; coffee is half of export earnings

BY JUDY WHITE

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — "Nicaragua considers the suspension of export quotas for coffee by the International Coffee Organization (ICO) a heavy blow, not only for the Nicaraguan economy, but for the economies of all those underdeveloped countries that depend heavily on their coffee exports to generate foreign exchange earnings," said Economy Minister Luis Carrión at a press conference here July 5.

The immediate impact of the suspension of coffee quotas has been a drastic fall in the price of coffee on the world market. If the price does not drop any more than it did in the days following the July 3 ICO meeting, Carrión said, and if Nicaragua maintains levels of production similar to those it had this year, the country will lose \$25 million with the 1989-90 crop because of the price drop. For a country whose total 1988 foreign exchange earnings reached only \$250 million, this is a significant loss.

Coffee accounts for 50 percent of Nicaragua's export earnings.

Nationalization of foreign trade

Citing statistics on comparative prices obtained for coffee on the international market among the countries of Central America, Carrión said that Nicaragua has made progress in getting a better price for its product in the 10 years since the revolutionary government came to power. He credited the nationalization of foreign trade in coffee for this progress.

The nationalization, Carrión said, "has permitted Nicaragua to negotiate through one single coffee exporter and therefore to be in a much stronger negotiating position with international buyers."

"We think this nationalization of foreign trade in coffee places us at a certain advantage for facing the new situation, relative to other Central American countries," he continued, while at the same time pointing to the probability of drastic speculative shifts in coffee prices and to the disadvantages small producer nations such as Nicaragua will face competing on the "free market."

However, Carrión said, "none of the coffee-producing countries are going to benefit" from the suspension of export quotas. "In the short run," he added, "the countries that consume coffee will benefit, because they are going to be able to buy the volumes of the types of coffee they want and at much lower

prices." Merchants in the United States buy more coffee on the world market than those from any other country.

The minister also explained the probable impact of the collapse of the quotas on the economic crisis Nicaragua is suffering. "We are involved in a tremendous effort to increase exports at the cost of a severe contraction of the internal market," he said, "and we foresaw for the coming year significant increases in the value of Nicaragua's exports — thanks to an improvement in the price of cotton, in the price and area planted with

sesame, and in the price and volume of production we expect from sugar. We were also anticipating greater earnings from increased production of coffee in the 1989-1990 cycle.

"Now it turns out," Carrión continued, "that the majority of these increases we are expecting will simply compensate for the loss of income brought on by the fall in coffee prices."

That will mean difficulties for coffee farmers and for the economy as a whole, Carrión stated.

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Defending Revolutionary Nicaragua Today. Speaker: Rashaad Ali, chairperson Baltimore Socialist Workers Party, member United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 27, just returned from two-week trip to Nicaragua. Sat., Aug. 19. Dinner 6 p.m.; program 7:30 p.m. 2913 Greenmount Ave. Donation: dinner \$3; program \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (301) 235-0013.

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St. Paul

What Can We Do to Defend Abortion Rights? Panel of speakers including Sheri Smith of Action for Abortion Rights; Wendy Lyons, Socialist Workers Party candidate for

mayor of St. Paul; others. Sat., Aug. 19, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

NEW JERSEY

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China in Crisis: Why Chinese Students and Working People Want Democratic Rights. Speaker: Fred Feldman, author of "Behind Crisis in China" series in *Militant*. Sat., Aug. 19, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (201) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Commemorate 33rd Anniversary of Interna-

tional Day of Solidarity with the Struggling Women of South Africa and Namibia. Speakers: representatives from African National Congress of South Africa and South West Africa People's Organisation. Fri., Aug. 11, 6-11 p.m. Local 1199, 310 W 43rd St. (at 8th Ave.) For more information call (212) 490-3487.

Picnic Popular. Annual fund-raising picnic for Ventana — Cultural Workers in Solidarity with Nicaragua. Sun., Aug. 13. Donation: \$10. For more information and directions to picnic site call (212) 316-9153.

CANADA

Toronto

Namibia Freedom Fight Deepens. Speaker:

Janet Fisher, Revolutionary Workers League. Video: *Namibia: Independence Now*. Sat., Aug. 12, 7:30 p.m. 410 Adelaide St. W., Suite 400. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (416) 861-1399.

Montréal

Abortion: A Woman's Right to Choose. Panel discussion: activists and leaders of the prochoice movement in Montréal, Toronto, and the U.S. Fri., Aug. 18, 7:30 p.m. 6566 Boul St-Laurent. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Forum Lutte Ouvrière. For more information call (514) 273-2503.

Evening to Celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. Speeches, music, and refreshments. Sat., Aug. 19, 8 p.m. Union française, 429 Viger Est. Donation: \$7. Sponsored by Carrefour culturel de l'Amitié Québec-Cuba.

Cuban revolution's 30 years celebrated across U.S.

Continued from front page

attacks. "This great solidarity will never be forgotten," she said.

Puerto Rican Socialist Party Central Committee member Alberto Gonzales detailed Cuba's uncompromising defense of his country's right to self-determination.

Other speakers included representatives of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front of El Salvador and the Antonio Maceo Brigade, a group of young Cuban-Americans who support the revolution.

Rally co-chair Cathy Sedwick of the Venceremos Brigade introduced three Eastern Airlines strikers, who stood to applause.

Greetings were read from the Dominican Workers Party, Grenada's Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement, and the Committee for a Democratic Palestine. Ranking members from the United Nations missions of Vietnam and Laos, including the latter's ambassador, were introduced and warmly received.

The event was organized by the Venceremos Brigade, Antonio Maceo Brigade, and Casa de las Américas and was endorsed by more than two dozen organizations, from Haitian, Caribbean, and Black organizations, to Nicaragua and El Salvador solidarity organizations and left political parties.

Close to 200 people turned out on July 29 in Boston to hear Andrés Gómez, a founder of the Antonio Maceo Brigade and editor of *Arelto* magazine, which features articles about Cuba and the Cuban-American community. The event was sponsored by the José Martí Project.

Gómez discussed recent events in Cuba and the trials of high-ranking Cuban officials for corruption and treason. "It means that no one is beyond the moral principles of the revolution," he said. The justice done "means that the revolution will go on" he stressed.

Cuba's role in Angola

Hafeni Hatutale, a member of the South West Africa People's Organisation, spoke to a meeting of 40 people in Omaha, Nebraska, on July 22. The victory of the Cuban revolution in 1959 "in a small part of the world encouraged others. The energy vibrated across the Atlantic Ocean to Africa," he said. Recounting the history of Cuba's support for the liberation of southern Africa, Hatutale underscored Cuba's role in Angola and at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale. "If it were not for

this, we would not be around to talk about independence for Namibia," he said.

Joel Gajardo, a Presbyterian minister who has traveled to Cuba several times, also spoke at the Omaha meeting. He was active in Salvador Allende's government in Chile in the early 1970s and noted Cuba's leadership in the fight against the Third World debt.

The meeting was hosted by the Unitarian Church and chaired by Rita Melgares, a Chicana activist and former leader of the Kiko Martinez Defense Committee.

More than 100 people marked the Cuban revolution's anniversary in Portland, Oregon. The July 30 meeting was the first of its kind to occur in many years there.

Karen Wald, a journalist living in Cuba since 1982, and her daughter, Sierra Thai Binh, were the featured speakers. Wald focused her remarks on exposing Washington's lies about Cuba.

Fidel Castro: 'We will not sugarcoat truth'

Continued from Page 22

Fidel also reminded his audience that at the beginning of the 1980s, "when Mr. Reagan burst out with great threats against Cuba," the Cuban leadership revolutionized the preparations for the defense of Cuba against the danger of imperialist attack.

"We cast aside the academic treatises on warfare. We retained all positive experience, all experience in conventional warfare. But we adopted as the doctrine of the defense of the country the revolutionary concept of war of the entire people. And everyone knows what this concept is, because everyone plays a part in this concept, which is the philosophy of what our country must do in whatever circumstances may occur."

The Cuban revolution has adopted a concept of defense that "counts only on our own forces," Fidel explained. "We know that in a total blockade not a liter of fuel, a bit of food, or a single bullet will get here. The USSR will not have sufficient conventional forces to break such a blockade thousands of miles from its borders. No country can rely on another for its defense," he added.

"What do they think, that we can't sleep at night?" Castro asked, referring to Cuba's

Wald and Binh toured the Seattle area July 31-August 1, speaking to a meeting of 60 people at the Elliot Bay Bookstore. Binh, who is 16 years old, spoke proudly of her 45-day experience on a volunteer construction brigade in Havana.

Laurien Alexandre, a leader of a coalition organized to counter restrictions on travel, trade, and information by the U.S. government, spoke at the Los Angeles celebration on July 29 sponsored by the Venceremos Brigade.

Alexandre discussed the U.S. attacks against Cuba, including Washington's provocative decision to beam TV broadcasts into Cuba.

"I learned the importance of internationalism through my contact with Cuba," said Jill Kobelssi describing Cuba's humanitarian

enemies. "That we are riddled with doubts in the face of these premises and hypotheses?"

No, he said, "we know who we are, what we have, and what we can do. We know what we can count on. That's why we're calm. Not even the worst that can come can frighten us!"

Even if "the socialist community were to disappear" and the imperialist powers colonized the Third World anew "like the worst times before the emergence of the first proletarian revolution," Castro said, "the struggle wouldn't stop there. The people would never accept it. The people would continue fighting, perhaps more than ever."

"And in the first ranks of this struggle would be our people, our country, our revolution!" he added, to an enthusiastic ovation.

In the event of "a total blockade that would prevent the arrival of even a liter of fuel or a bit of food, we know what we would do, and we know it very well. In case of a war of attrition, we know what we would do, and we know how we would resist."

"And in case of an invasion and occupation of the country by Yankee troops, we know how we would resist, how we would fight, and what we would do. And we know that sooner or later the price will be too high for

aid, political solidarity, and military role in Angola. Kobelssi is a member of the Venceremos Brigade and chaired the July 29 meeting in Philadelphia.

Godfrey Sithole, a member of the ANC, and Dr. George Zahr of the Palestine Aid Society also spoke. For the Palestinian people "Fidel was as popular as the Palestinian flag," said Zahr. "What Cuba said to us," he continued, "was that it is possible" to win.

The Philadelphia celebration was endorsed by Palestinian, Irish, and Central America solidarity groups; the ANC; and Black groups. It was sponsored by the Venceremos Brigade.

A slideshow and report from the recent trip to Cuba by the Venceremos Brigade attracted 100 people to a celebration in San Francisco on July 30. A panel of brigadistas led a lively discussion on Cuba.

the aggressors, and they would have to leave our country."

This determination, Castro said, is consistent with more than a century of revolutionary struggle of the Cuban people for their independence and the right to self-determination. He invoked the names of heroes of Cuba's revolutionary wars for independence in the 19th Century — Antonio Maceo, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, José Martí, Ignacio Agramonte, and Máximo Gómez — stressing socialist Cuba's continuity with their revolutionary intransigence.

"This is the same country and the same people as those of Céspedes and Martí."

"This is the same country and the same people as those of Agramonte and Máximo Gómez."

"This is the same country and the same people as those of the Bronze Titan, Antonio Maceo."

And, he concluded, "This is the same country and the same people as those of Moncada, the Bay of Pigs, and internationalism, but with a revolutionary consciousness higher than ever before."

"And this people and this country will know how to live up to their glorious history!"

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Christchurch: 593a Colombo St. (upstairs). Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 656-055.

Wellington: 23 Majoribanks St., Courtenay Pl. Postal address: P.O. Box 9092. Tel: (4) 844-205.

SWEDEN

Stockholm: P.O. Box 5024, S-12505 Älvsjö. Tel: (08) 722-9342.

How cruel can they get — The feds are trying to extract unpaid taxes from Texas moneybags Bunker Hunt. Frets Hunt, "I think in a way... if it had been a criminal



Harry Ring

action it would have been less painful. I'd just be fighting to stay out of jail instead of losing all my money."

High treason — Britain's Angli-

an water district, northeast of London, has the country's worst case of nitrate pollution. Scientists there were warned they faced stiff jail terms and fines if they talked about the cost of dealing with the problem. With plans to privatize the nation's water resources, the government feels such talk would discourage investors.

Might reduce number of homeless — What with the apple surplus created by the revelations of Alar contamination, the government is buying up \$15 million worth to distribute to the needy. The apples will not be tested for Alar.

That's what Marcos thought — With the economic crunch in their

country, some Philippine women are being pushed into mail-order marriages with U.S. citizens. Says a U.S. marriage broker, "Many, many American men are very sick and tired of the attitudes of American women." But a Filipina, he asserts is "the type of woman that used to exist in this country in the 19th century."

Back talk? — A radio station in New Haven, Connecticut, has a new call-in contest. At the sound of a tanker crashing into a reef, grab the phone. The ninth caller gets a free oil change from a chain of oil and lube garages. Their slogan, "We know how to dispose of oil properly."

The caring system — The Provident (?) insurance company has canceled the medical coverage of the Helms family in Peoria, Illinois. Two years ago, Roz Helms gave birth, prematurely, to quintuplets. The children have been in and out of the hospital since, and the bill totals \$2.75 million.

Model citizens — We favor an award for Provident insurance for not letting human concern stand in the way of sound business practice. And one for the hospital which, even by current standards of medical thievery, distinguished itself by coming up with a tab of \$550,000 for each of those quintuplets.

Relax folks — In Britain, a gov-

ernment-appointed "independent" panel checked out widespread illness in an area where 20 tons of aluminium sulphate had been dumped into the water supply. The panelists found "early symptoms" of nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, sore eyes, and mouth ulcers. But, they assured, all this was the result of "anxiety."

Not to rush — A congressional committee suggested that the Food and Drug Administration do another study rather than limit the use of red dye No. 3. Apparently they're concerned about the risk of undue haste. The dye does cause cancer, and both Congress and the FDA have been studying the problem. But only since 1960.

'All workers have stake in Puerto Rico freedom fight'

The following statement was issued by the New York Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor, James Harris, and candidate for city council president, Jerry Freiwirth. In a two-week petitioning drive in July campaign supporters collected 12,118 signatures to put the SWP candidates on the ballot in the November 7 election. This surpasses the legal requirement of 7,500.

We support the August 12 demonstration in favor of independence for Puerto Rico to be held at the United Nations in New York City. This demonstration, and the demand for self-determination for Puerto Rico it champions, deserve the backing of every working person in the United States, and we urge the broadest possible participation in the march and rally.

The proposed plebiscite on the status of Puerto Rico being debated in the halls of Congress has opened up a big discussion in both Puerto Rico and the United States. While Washington has no intention of letting the people of Puerto Rico determine their own fate, this discussion opens up opportunities for advancing the fight to end U.S. subjugation of this Caribbean nation.

Working people in the United States have a special responsibility to actively support the Puerto Rican freedom struggle as it is the government of this country that holds the people of Puerto Rico in colonial bondage. A blow struck to weaken the exploitation of the working people and farmers of Puerto Rico by U.S. big business is a blow struck against the very same employers who are currently on an offensive to drive down our wages and working conditions and force family farmers off their land.

One of oldest colonies

Puerto Rico is one of the oldest colonies in the world — ruled first by the Spanish for 400 years and then by Washington for the last 91 years. Among the social consequences of this colonial status are low wages, unemployment, and inferior education and health care.

A few statistics illustrate the effects of colonialism in Puerto Rico. The per capita income on the island in 1988 was \$5,157, less than half that of the United States as a whole. Official unemployment figures in 1988 for Puerto Rico show 15 percent of the

population unable to find work, compared to an average of 5.5 percent in the United States. The real unemployment figures are much higher.

One effect of this economic hardship and lack of opportunity is that a large percentage of the population has been forced to leave their homeland and move to the United States in search of work. More than 2 million Puerto Ricans live in the United States. The total population in Puerto Rico today is 3.5 million.

In the United States immigrants from Puerto Rico face racist discrimination. They are forced into the lowest-paying and dirtiest jobs and can only find housing in over-priced, run-down sections of the city.

U.S. employers have been on an offensive against working people since the early 1970s in pursuit of maintaining their profit rates in the face of increased international competition. This offensive has hit the Puerto Rican communities, and other peoples who suffer special oppression because of their race or national origin, first and hardest.

The youth of Puerto Rico have also served as cannon fodder for the wars waged by the U.S. government. Puerto Ricans serving in the U.S. military have been killed in numbers far greater than their proportion of the population.

The island of Puerto Rico also serves as a base for the U.S. government to seek to dominate the whole region of Central America and the Caribbean. More than 13 percent of the land area in Puerto Rico is controlled by the Pentagon.

The fight for the independence of the island is a fight to improve social conditions

in Puerto Rico. It is a fight to use the vast natural and human resources of the island to benefit its inhabitants rather than foreign capitalists.

Sister nation Cuba

Puerto Rico's sister nation — Cuba — is an outstanding example of what a revolutionary people are capable of accomplishing when they decide to throw off the yoke of dependence and take their future into their own hands. Prior to the Cuban revolution in 1969, Cuba's capitalist economy was tied nearly as closely to U.S. capitalism as Puerto Rico's economy is today.

After the revolution, in response to Washington's aggressive actions, workers took over U.S. and Cuban capitalists' holdings and began to construct a socialist society. The Cuban road is ultimately the only road open to the people of Puerto Rico, and to all other working people of the world today.

As working people in the United States face the prospect of a deep recession in the last decade of the 20th century and the very real possibility of a worldwide depression, we need a perspective that unites us and puts us in a position to defend ourselves from the crisis of the capitalist system.

It is only by keeping us divided that the employing class is able to maintain their rule over us. One of the fundamental divisions in the U.S. working class is that between workers who happen to be born in this country and those who were born elsewhere. By vigorously supporting the fight for the independence of Puerto Rico, we are rejecting this artificial division and strengthening our class as a whole.

New York march set for Aug. 12



Militant/Ron Richards

June rally in San Juan was one of Puerto Rico's largest proindependence actions

Continued from front page

ence to build the action will be held in Chicago, with several aldermen speaking, and that mass leafleting, collections, and other activities are taking place in the city's Puerto Rican communities. "Overall, we're pretty optimistic," he said in an interview following the meeting. "Our biggest problem is raising enough money to send everyone who wants to go. We're projecting the participation of 300 to 400 people from Chicago."

Larry Rossello from Boston reported that more than 2,000 leaflets for the demonstration have been posted and that thousands of copies of a special newspaper on the march will be distributed at a July 30 Puerto Rican parade.

"We've had a fantastic response from Puerto Rican youth in Philadelphia," explained Nivea Torres.

"We've been presenting a program with a video on Puerto Rico and a speaker on the fight for independence to groups of youth attending summer schools organized by various Puerto Rican community groups."

"This is a historical moment," Julio Rosado, a leader of the Puerto Rican National Liberation Movement and co-coordinator of the coalition, said, "Every act of support for Puerto Rican independence and self-determination must be exercised now."

José Berríos of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party and a leading activist in the coalition explained, "We expect the August 12 demonstration to be larger than other recent demonstrations in support of Puerto Rican independence given the discussion around the plebiscite."

"We are aiming to create the conditions to bring together the independence movement both in Puerto Rico and in the United States," Berríos said. "We are resolved to achieve independence for our island, but we cannot do it without the active solidarity of the American people. It is the responsibility of all democratically minded people in the United States to take the opportunity presented by the August 12 march to oppose the colonial policy of the U.S. government in Puerto Rico."

—10 AND 25 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWS WEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

Aug. 10, 1979

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Headed by a column of armed Sandinistas, more than 5,000 peasants and agricultural workers marched from Diriamba to Jinotepe — two towns 30 miles south of here — on July 29.

More than 20 cooperatives of farm workers from Carazo Province participated in the action, which was organized by the Association of Rural Workers (ATC). Their slogan was "The lands of the assassins belong to the peasants."

According to an account published in the July 30 issue of the Sandinista daily *Barricada*, the peasants "expressed their firm decision to expropriate the land of the *somocistas* [Somoza and his supporters] and administer them in a collective way to strengthen the process of agrarian reform in the area."

At a news conference here July 30, Sandinista leader Jaime Wheelock explained the aims of the new government in the countryside. Wheelock heads the newly formed Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA).

"The agrarian reform is aimed above all at solving the problems of the peasants without land or with tiny plots," Wheelock said. "The lands of the *somocistas* will be handed mainly to these peasants, as well as being used for large agricultural enterprises that will be administered by the state."

THE MILITANT

Published in the interests of the Working People

Aug. 10, 1964

NEW YORK, Aug. 5 — "All U.S. warships, planes, and troops should be immediately withdrawn from Southeast Asia," today declared Clifton DeBerry, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, as the news came of bombing attacks by U.S. planes on coastal installations in North Vietnam.

DeBerry termed the attacks ordered by President Lyndon Johnson "open, unabashed acts of aggression carried out in contemptuous disregard of international law and of all humane and civilized sentiments." The blood of the people of North Vietnam and of the American pilots killed in the attack was on Johnson's hands, he said.

The Negro candidate for president said that the attack on North Vietnam had been planned in the White House and Pentagon for a long time. "The incidents in the Gulf of Tonkin between the U.S. destroyer and the North Vietnamese PT boats were the pretext not the cause of the U.S. air attack," he asserted. He pointed out that for the past six months U.S. authorities have been leaking stories about the need to attack North Vietnam because the U.S.-sponsored civil war in South Vietnam was doing so poorly.

Cuba leads fight for socialism in world of war, economic crisis

"We need to know where we are, what world we live in, and what problems threaten the creative efforts of our people."

"We live in a period of great economic problems in the world, above all in the Third World—a time of great debt, of great economic crises."

"We are living through a special moment within the world revolutionary movement. We aren't going to sugarcoat the truth. We have to call things by their right names. . . ."

"The future carries threats because of the imperialists' political course, their beliefs, their euphoria that socialism is in decline and that the time is coming when Cuba will have to pay the price for more than 30 years of revolution. But they won't collect anything here!"

These words are from Cuban President Fidel Castro's speech on July 26. He was outlining the world political framework for the sharpening battle taking place in Cuba today to improve, develop, and defend socialism as part of the international struggle of the exploited and oppressed against imperialist military aggression and economic catastrophe.

Castro's speech is also a challenge to the workers and farmers of Cuba and of the entire world—from the United States to Argentina, from Sweden to South Africa—to face up to this capitalist-dominated world as it really is and to join the fight to rid the globe forever of war, oppression, and exploitation.

U.S. President George Bush, Castro explained, "carries out a policy of peace with the big countries and of war against the small progressive peoples." Despite all Washington's talk about disarmament and détente, the international crisis of the capitalist system means more imperialist military adventures directed against all those fighting for the right to decide their own affairs, independently of Wall Street and Washington.

In Panama, Nicaragua, El Salvador, the Middle East, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Angola, and elsewhere, Washington proclaims its right to threaten and intervene.

The danger to Cuba today is real, warned Castro. Cuba cannot depend on military help from any other country in the event of a blockade or invasion by imperialism. It can rely only on the military and political preparedness of its own people, and the solidarity of all those in the world who look to the Cuban revolution as a leader in the fight against imperialist aggression and injustice, and defend its right to choose its own future.

In 1914 the modern world was ripped apart by the interimperialist slaughter that came to be known as World War I. A way out of the horrors imposed on the globe by the capitalist system was shown with the October 1917 Russian revolution, led by V.I. Lenin's Bolshevik Party.

Lenin, Castro said on July 26, "was the founder of the first socialist state. He opened the first great road toward liberation for the peoples of the world."

Today, it is Cuba that is standing firm and refusing to bend to imperialist threats. It is Cuba that is explaining to the whole world that socialism is the only route out of underdevelopment and poverty for the semicolonial lands.

The governments of other countries of Latin America, Asia, and Africa have refused to heed Castro's warning that the Third World debt is politically, morally, and physically unpayable and there must be a united front to fight for its cancellation. Instead, they are imposing ever more severe belt-tightening measures on the toilers in an attempt to appease their imperialist creditors.

Cuba's example, as well as its unwavering internationalist aid to fighters against imperialism everywhere, have made it a central target of Washington's wrath. To counter this threat, Cuba adopted in 1980 what Castro calls "the revolutionary concept of war of the entire people," organizing millions of working people into the Territorial Troops Militia and preparing for any and every variety of Yankee military aggression.

Key to preparing Cuba's toilers to defend and improve the course toward socialism has been the decision of the leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba to undertake a "rectification process" to confront and overcome the bureaucratic obstacles that have grown up in Cuba.

This process has been qualitatively deepened with the resolute response to the discovery of treasonous crimes by Revolutionary Armed Forces ex-general Arnaldo Ochoa and top officials of the Ministry of the Interior.

The decisions to apply Cuba's most severe criminal punishment, the death penalty, to Ochoa and three others, to dismiss and mete out stiff jail terms to other corrupt officials, and to begin to rebuild the crippled Interior Ministry are essential to advancing the assault on a privileged, reactionary social layer whose existence is known and resented by the mass of Cuban working people.

"What do the lives of these gentlemen have to do with the life of a worker, the customs of these gentlemen with the customs of our working class?" asked Castro in his July 9 speech to the Council of State. "They are two different worlds, and we cannot rest until there is one single world

here; not the world of the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, but the world of our workers, our working class, our proletariat, our farmers."

Working people everywhere owe a debt of gratitude to the Cuban government and army for investigating, apprehending, exposing, convicting, and executing these officials. Through their drug trafficking, black market deals, and outright robbery, they betrayed the revolution by opening the doors to enemy agents, endangering the security of the revolution itself. They also sullied the standing of socialism and the Cuban revolution, thereby politically weakening its defenses at a critical moment. "They were depriving us of our moral weapons," explained Castro.

Ochoa and his cronies were carrying out their business deals while the Cuban armed forces were preparing for a decisive military engagement in Angola where Cuba "staked everything," explained Castro in his Council of State report.

"Even the revolution was at stake there, because if this was a decisive battle for apartheid and meant a large-scale defeat, the revolution was also at stake and a different outcome would have meant a major defeat for the revolution, regardless of how noble, how just, and how altruistic the cause," stressed the Cuban leader.

Some 50,000 troops and large numbers of Cuba's most advanced weapons were airlifted to Angola in 1987-88, stripping Cuba's own defenses in order to assemble the necessary forces to defend Angola's independence and deal a crushing blow to the racist regime in South Africa.

The Cuban leadership was even prepared, Castro explained, to extend the fighting into neighboring Namibia if necessary, which is under South African occupation.

"It was precisely when we were carrying out that big feat," Castro told the Council of State, "Cuba's greatest internationalist effort so far, that these shameful and despicable events took place."

The real victory in Angola, said Castro, was "to obtain the basic objectives without sacrificing thousands of lives." This concern for achieving victories with a "minimum of sacrifices" of lives, he said, has always been a hallmark of the Cuban revolution. Only combat-ready leadership that is disciplined, honest, and uncompromising can minimize loss of troops. Leaders like Ochoa, who wanted to be popular with the troops and an "independent thinker," inevitably result in greater loss of life.

Ochoa refused even to carry out his assignment to attend all joint decision-making meetings of the Angolan, Soviet, and Cuban military officials in Luanda. His absence helped lead to serious military errors that cost the lives of Cuban soldiers.

In explaining why it was necessary to apply Cuba's maximum criminal punishment rather than some lesser penalty, Cuban leaders argued that a key principle of the revolution was at stake: the lives of those who wear stars and medals are not worth more than anyone else in Cuba.

Armed Forces Minister Raúl Castro told the Council of State that while a commander in Angola, Ochoa had correctly signed three execution orders for young Cuban soldiers who had raped and murdered Angolan women. If Ochoa were to be treated more leniently than those young soldiers, it would mean that human life in Cuba has a differentiated value depending on your wealth or political connections.

Leaders have more, not less, responsibility to be a model of communist discipline and morality. Cuban internationalist volunteers in Angola wrote a letter to Raúl Castro along these lines, urging, "Let the full weight of revolutionary law fall on Arnaldo Ochoa. His military record, far from being a mitigating factor, becomes an aggravating one because he was unworthy of the honor and trust placed in him."

Cuba's decisiveness in confronting the scourge of trafficking in drugs has been widely applauded. This reputation was stained by the activities of Ochoa and the Interior Ministry officers.

For Cuba's working people, this is a deeply felt issue. Prior to the revolution 30 years ago that overthrew the U.S.-backed tyranny of Fulgencio Batista, Cuba was a playground for wealthy U.S. citizens. Drugs, prostitution, gambling, bribery, corruption, and filth of all kinds were standard. Thousands gave their lives over the years to "make this a decent country . . . to build a republic where justice and law would prevail, a republic where there would be no corruption," explained Fidel Castro.

As we celebrate the 30th year of the first socialist revolution in the Americas, two tasks confront all those who are part of the fight against imperialism and all its evils:

- To tell the truth about the Cuban revolution and its accomplishments, including the latest events and their meaning.

- To demand an end to Washington's aggression: the trade embargo, travel ban, spy flights, military threats, and the maintenance of a U.S. military base on Cuban territory in Guantánamo. U.S. hands off Cuba!

The fight against the death penalty in the U.S.

BY DOUG JENNESS

It took Horace Franklin Dunkins, Jr., 19 minutes to die. He was strapped to an electric chair in Atmore, Alabama, on July 14. The 28-year-old Black man was still alive nine minutes after the first throw of the switch. It took a second jolt of current before he was pronounced dead and became the first person executed in the United States since the Supreme Court in June upheld the death penalty for mentally retarded prisoners.

In the same ruling the court said states could also execute youths who were only 16 at the time of the crime for which they were convicted.

A few days earlier, the court had held that poor inmates on death row have no constitutional right to a government-paid lawyer in pursuing a second round of appeals.

These rulings put the stamp of approval on using the death penalty more widely. But they also captured in a certain way

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

how the ruling families view working people in general. In the eyes of the ruling rich, workers are potentially dangerous—youth especially are suspect of being rebels—and threaten to disrupt the stability of orderly business dealings and governmental operations. Moreover, to the ruling families workers' lives and rights don't count for much.

The working class, or at least the biggest part of it, is viewed as a criminal class by the capitalist exploiters of wage labor and debt-ridden farmers. They have created an extensive repressive apparatus, which includes the use of the death penalty, to safeguard their domination and property from this class.

Their cops, courts, prisons, and death rows have one purpose—to repress, intimidate, and terrorize working people—to force them to accept their place in capitalist society with its inequalities and oppression.

The inmates in the country's bulging jails are mostly workers, drawn disproportionately from the most oppressed sectors of the working class. Police harassment and violence is aimed at keeping the exploited in their place, at attempting to squelch any conduct deemed rebellious, unruly, or disorderly—whether it is on the picket line, at a farm gate, or in the streets of the Black community.

Scores of youth, especially Blacks, Latinos, and other oppressed minorities, are killed every year, gunned down or beaten to death by cops. Capital punishment is simply a court-approved extension of these executions carried out on the street, in police cars, or in jail cells.

There are more than 2,000 prisoners in death row across the country. They are the victims of class exploitation and racial oppression, which push working people into poverty and insecurity, brutalize them on the job, and send them to fight wars against fellow workers in other countries.

As an editorial against the death penalty in the May 14, 1971, *Militant* put it, "The tiny ruling class, with the blood of countless Southeast Asians on its hands, says: 'It is unlawful to kill.' From the working majority they steal billions of dollars in profits, taxes, and graft and then say: 'It is unlawful to steal.'"

Class-struggle fighters for many years have fought to abolish the death penalty in the United States and other capitalist countries. And in many places we have won its abolition. But the battle against capitalist repression will only be won when the rule of big business is overturned by workers and farmers and replaced with their own government.

Working people in power will undertake the task of ridding society of the violence and brutality that is intrinsic to capitalist rule. History teaches, however, that the new power of the toilers will have to be prepared to defend itself arms in hand against a "slaveholders' rebellion" and to face the harsh conditions of civil war.

Workers' leaders who flee from this fact will only guarantee the defeat of the toilers, and the return to power of the capitalists.

As we struggle against the remnants of the past, our goal will be to construct a new kind of society. Consistent with this, communists pledge to fight to make elimination of capital punishment part of the program of the workers' and farmers' government.

Writing in June 1917, the Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin noted that during the French revolution the Jacobins executed many "enemies of the people." "The Jacobins of 1793," he wrote, "belonged to the most revolutionary classes of the 18th century, the town and country poor," and set a "great example of a truly revolutionary struggle against the class of exploiters."

But "the 'Jacobins' of the 20th century, the workers and semi-proletarians," Lenin continued, "would not guillotine" their enemies, the capitalists. "To follow a good example does not mean copying it," he said. "It would be enough to arrest 50 to a hundred financial magnates and bigwigs, the chief knights of embezzlement and of robbery by the banks."

Malcolm X's influence on Grenadian revolutionaries

BY DON ROJAS

Once asked by a reporter who were some of the figures that influenced his political thoughts and activities, Maurice Bishop, the late revolutionary leader of Grenada, listed among others, Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Fidel Castro, Frantz Fanon, Marcus Garvey, and Malcolm X. He added that reading and absorbing the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* was one of the most profound experiences of his life.

Bishop never met Malcolm X in person, but the latter's spirit, example, and inspiration as an outstanding fighter for human liberation was always present in his consciousness



CARIB NOTES

Don Rojas

and in the minds and hearts of other Grenadian revolutionaries.

The anti-imperialist revolution Bishop led between 1979 and 1983 represented in a real sense the historical continuity and further enrichment of Malcolm X's legacy and political trajectory.

Like Malcolm, Bishop was gunned down at 39, but they lived long enough for Black activists in the United States and the Caribbean to lay affectionate claim to both as their "Black shining princes." And, oppressed peoples around the world proclaimed them both as martyrs for the cause of world revolution.

Malcolm X's mother was born and raised in Grenada before going to the United States, and his father was a follower of Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican leader who, earlier in this century, taught Black people in the Western Hemisphere to be proud of their ancestry and to fight for equal rights, respect, and independence.

To my knowledge, Malcolm never visited the Caribbean but he had on occasion met with regional leaders, and had spoken often about the struggle of Blacks in the Caribbean for self-determination.

Shortly before his murder, Bishop authorized that the

house in which Malcolm's mother had lived be turned into a national monument in honor of her son. Not surprisingly, the current neocolonial regime of Herbert Blaize has seen to it that Bishop's order was not carried out.

Remembering the respect that Bishop held for Malcolm X, I am quite certain that were the Grenadian leader alive today he would surely place on the top of his personal reading list and would have encouraged all Grenadians to read the newly published book by Pathfinder entitled *Malcolm X: The Last Speeches*. Yet, this and all other printed material on or about Malcolm X is today officially banned in Grenada.

Publication of this book comes at a time when interest in Malcolm X's life and thoughts is growing in the United States among people of color and among anti-imperialist fighters.

This Malcolm X "revival," almost 25 years after his assassination in New York City, is manifested in forums, photo and poster exhibits, movies, plays, and other forms of popular culture.

This new book, which adds to a collection of six other Pathfinder publications on or by Malcolm X, features two university speeches he made in 1963, two radio interviews he gave in 1964 and two speeches delivered in 1965. It also contains a brief chronology of his life and a set of rare photographs, including one with him and Fidel Castro.

In the book's introduction, editor Bruce Perry speaks about making contact with Malcolm's Grenadian relatives on a visit to the newly liberated island shortly after Bishop and his freedom fighters conquered power in March 1979.

Perry describes Malcolm X as "the standard-bearer for an entire generation of Black militants" and states that even his detractors acknowledge that he was "one of the foremost American political figures and political orators of the mid-20th century."

Malcolm's ability to move millions of people around the world echoes off the pages of this new book. His last speeches resonate with his familiar themes of unflinching opposition to segregation and to all forms of racist terror in the United States and for the right of Blacks to arm themselves in self-defense where and when necessary.

But they also reflect the important changes that Malcolm X's political views had undergone in the last two years of his life and following his second visit to Africa and the

Middle East.

The evolution in his thinking towards anti-imperialism and revolutionary internationalism is captured in the two 1965 speeches. Here he identifies fully with national liberation struggles throughout Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

In a preface to the new book, Pathfinder Director Steve Clark notes that toward the end of his life Malcolm had begun to link internationalism with Black liberation and reviewed his earlier criticisms of the civil rights movement.

As well, Malcolm's views on the political and social advancement of women and his separation of his religious beliefs as a Muslim and the objective need for a nonreligious political organization of equal women and men took concrete form when he launched the Organization of Afro-American Unity in June 1964, less than one year before he was killed.

Furthermore, Clark cites Malcolm's "growing anti-capitalism" and his decision in the last months of his life to no longer define his viewpoint as "Black nationalism" as significant indicators of the changes in his political orientation.

Indeed, the last speeches reveal a political maturity in Malcolm X all too often overlooked, underestimated, or misunderstood by both his critics and supporters.

In May 1983, many longtime followers of Malcolm X were in an overflow audience of some 2,500 persons who heard a memorable speech by Maurice Bishop at New York's Hunter College. Afterward, they commented to several of us in Bishop's entourage that not since Malcolm's death had they heard such oratory anywhere in New York City.

This and many other speeches by Bishop were published by Pathfinder in December 1983 in a book that beautifully complements the latest in this series on Malcolm.

As James 67X Shabazz, longtime comrade of Malcolm's who provided some of the material for this book, said back in 1965, "Malcolm X's body lies in a grave... but his thoughts, like invisible seeds, have been planted in the minds of oppressed peoples in America, in Africa, in the Middle East, and in Europe."

Malcolm X: The Last Speeches is currently being sold in bookstores around the world. For information on its availability write to: Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

LETTERS

Eastern

At the St. Louis airport recently, an Eastern striker picketing at the airline's ticket counter was approached by an older woman passenger. "What's going on here?" she asked.

The striker told her about Lorenzo's drive against workers' wages, working conditions, and union rights.

The woman then walked around the terminal with her son, talking over what the striker had told her.

After a little while, pickets saw her return to the Eastern counter, turn in her ticket, and demand her money back.

Ellen Haywood
St. Louis, Missouri

Prison 'inspections'

I would like to draw your atten-

tion to a problem with our county jails and state and federal prisons. Every time a county jail or a state or federal prison is inspected, penal officials are invariably given notice of the time and date.

This gives the officials time to prepare a showcased production that may not reflect the norm of prison conditions. Why should inspectors give prison officials an advance warning, which gives them time to prepare special meals, wax floors, sanitize, fumigate, and where needed, re-audit books and records?

Accurate evaluations are only possible when inspection teams make unannounced visits. The current charade makes a mockery of ongoing concern for the increasing crime rate, rehabilitation programs, and the manner in which public monies are spent. The public has a right to know that reports on prison inspection are unbiased, accurate, and perceptive.

A prisoner
Leavenworth, Kansas

Great coverage

The coverage on Mark Curtis has been great. So has the coverage from Nicaragua. You've done a great job on the Eastern Airlines strike, too.

A.L.
Yardley, Pennsylvania

Clarification

I need some clarification on several points.

1. Can a revolution be elected? Are Socialist Workers Party candidates running for office because it's felt that once the SWP gains a majority, the capitalists will have no choice but to bow out, or do they run for information purposes? To gain a forum not normally permitted?

2. Does the term "worker" need to be revised to adjust for the decline of U.S. industry and the rise of white collar jobs?

3. I've been reading some literature from the Socialist Labor Party.



They seem to feel that the Russian revolution was doomed to failure because it happened before capitalism had a chance to reach its full potential. Was it too much to expect? Should the revolutionaries of the time have pushed for a capitalist revolution?

The SLP makes a big point of saying that Leon Trotsky failed to recognize the bureaucrats as a class. If they're a class, or a group or a caste, just how important is the distinction?

The SLP felt one of the reasons the Stalinists found it easy to take control was the top-down management style of the party — and the fact that there were thousands of good Bolsheviks but only a small handful of world-class leaders in the party. After V.I. Lenin and Trotsky, the quality dropped off quickly.

The SLP thinks it's okay for unions to struggle to improve conditions for the workers, but they feel it's almost hopeless, unless the unions disband and start all over. All the present unions are structured wrong. Unless their avowed purpose

is to destroy capitalism, they haven't a chance.

Jeff Cohen
Plano, Texas

Death penalty

I was disappointed to find that the *Militant* let pass without editorial comment the execution on July 13 of four Cuban officers convicted of drug smuggling.

The *Militant* has long consistently advocated abolition of the death penalty, which is used by both capitalists and Stalinists to intimidate, silence, and eliminate working-class fighters.

The continued presence of the death penalty in Cuba, however infrequently used, is a defect in the revolution. Pointing this out is the best way to openly and honestly defend the Cuban revolution and communism.

James Miles
Chicago, Illinois

Miners' strike coverage

You will find enclosed \$17 to cover a six-month subscription to

the *Militant*.

Please continue your excellent coverage of the coal miners' strike in particular, and all events in Angola, Nicaragua, Namibia, and the world in general. Thank you for keeping us informed.

We are looking forward to receiving the first *Militant* of our new subscription.

E.M.
Caneyville, Kentucky

The *Militant* special prisoner fund makes it possible to send reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners who can't pay for them. To help this important cause, send your contribution to: Militant Prisoner Subscription Fund, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Correction

In the review of the Pathfinder pamphlet *Palestine and the Arabs' Fight for Liberation*, by Fred Feldman and Georges Sayad, which appeared in the August 4 *Militant*, Feldman is cited as advocating "a democratic, secular Palestine in which Arabs, Jews, Christians, and other people can live in peace, freedom, and equality."

The quotation includes an editorial error, which appears on page 9 of the published pamphlet. The statement should read, "a democratic, secular Palestine in which Muslims, Jews, Christians, and other people can live in peace, freedom, and equality."

Arabs are not a religious grouping but a broad national one. They may be Muslims, Christians, of other religions, or nonreligious.

This is stated correctly elsewhere in the pamphlet.

Thousands across Canada protest attacks on abortion rights

BY ANNETTE KOURI

MONTREAL — In a massive outpouring of anger and determination thousands of people demonstrated in cities across Canada on July 27 in support of women's right to decide whether to have an abortion.

The cross-Canada mobilization took place the day after the province of Québec's Court of Appeal decided to uphold a lower court injunction preventing 21-year-old Chantal Daigle from having an abortion. The injunction was sought by her former companion. Daigle, who is now 22 weeks pregnant, risks a jail term of one year and a \$5,000 fine if she defies the injunction and proceeds with the abortion.

Chanting "Neither pope, judge, doctor, or spouse, it's a woman's decision" and "Maternity a choice, abortion a right," more than 10,000 people took to the streets of Montréal.

Many participants had been involved in the wave of mobilizations in the 1970s that forced the Québec government to recognize in practice the right to abortion despite the federal criminal code that virtually outlawed abortion. Thousands of others were participating in their first political demonstration.

The labor movement also helped to build the Montréal action. The Québec Coalition for Free and Accessible Abortion, which called the demonstration, includes the three major labor federations in Québec.

In Vancouver, 1,500 prochoice supporters gathered downtown for a noon rally. In Toronto, 1,000 rain-drenched people gathered outside a Québec government office.

Demonstrations of several hundred took place in many other cities across Canada, including Calgary, Saskatoon, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Québec City, Halifax, and St. John's. There was a demonstration in Edmonton on July 29.

In his ruling, Chief Justice Yves Bernier of the Québec Court of Appeal wrote that the fetus is a "distinct human entity" and "has a right to life and protection by those who conceived it." He declared that the "rights of the fetus" take precedent over the rights of the woman and that the father or any other party can intervene to prevent an abortion.

It is the first time in Canada that a high court has tried to force a woman to carry a pregnancy to term. This decision contradicts the January 1988 judgement of the Supreme Court of Canada, won after two decades of struggle, which legalized abortion by declaring unconstitutional the federal criminal code articles dealing with abortion.

"The invasion of privacy and denial of a basic right by means of court injunctions must be stopped," stated New Democratic Party leader Ed Broadbent. Broadbent demanded that the federal government intervene on behalf of Daigle in the appeal of the injunction she placed before the Supreme Court of Canada.

Norma Scarborough, spokesperson for the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL), predicted, "There is going to be an outpouring of rage by women in the streets of this country like we have not seen in a long time."

In a statement distributed to the Montréal demonstration, Michel Dugré and Michel Prairie, candidates of the Revolutionary Workers League in the upcoming Québec provincial elections, explained, "The events of the last weeks mark the opening of a huge North American-wide struggle with the supporters and enemies of women's rights mobilizing their forces."

"The outcome of this confrontation will not be decided in the courts," the statement pointed out, "but in the battles to come in the United States, Canada, and throughout the world."

The injunction against Daigle is the culmination of a concerted campaign by the federal government under Conservative anti-



In Montréal 10,000 people demonstrated to protest court attack on abortion rights

abortion rights Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to prepare the groundwork for a new law to restrict abortion rights.

Taking their cue from the Mulroney government, several provincial governments responded to the 1988 Supreme Court decision with cutbacks in hospital abortion services. These attacks have accelerated since the U.S. Supreme Court decision on July 3 restricting

access to abortion in the United States. The injunction against Daigle was the third such injunction requested in Canada since the U.S. court decision. The first two were not upheld.

In the face of popular opposition, the Mulroney government's effort to bring in new legislation last summer restricting abortion rights failed. However, Mulroney now says that he intends to put new legislation before

the next session of Parliament, which opens September 25.

However, the opposition of the federal government to women's right to abortion runs counter to the opinion of the majority of working people. Polls consistently show that the majority of the population in Canada believes abortion is a private matter to be decided by the woman in consultation with her doctor and not a question to be decided by Parliament or the courts.

"The July 27 demonstration show that this sentiment can be mobilized in the streets," Revolutionary Workers League candidate Michel Dugré said. "More emergency actions are needed to put pressure on the Supreme Court to throw out the injunction denying Chantal Daigle's right to an abortion."

"Bigger and broader demonstrations are needed to prevent the government from recriminalizing abortion and bringing in new restrictive antiabortion laws. Ottawa must be forced to use its powers to ensure that abortion becomes a normal medical procedure accessible to all women who choose to have it."

An important step in this direction has been taken by CARAL and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, which have called for a Canada-wide day of protest October 14 in support of a woman's right to abortion.

Under the pressure of the current mobilizations the Supreme Court of Canada decided August 1 to hear Chantal Daigle's appeal. The hearing will take place August 8.

Israel provokes 'hostage crisis'

BY HARRY RING

Washington's response to the reported execution of a U.S. hostage in Lebanon included a veiled threat of a military strike against Lebanon or Iran.

A military response was among the options being weighed by President George Bush's administration.

On Capitol Hill Rep. George Gekas, a Pennsylvania Republican, declared, "We need revenge. We need justice."

The killing of Lt. Col. William Higgins in Lebanon was provoked by the Israeli kidnapping of a Muslim cleric leader there.

In Israel officials said that Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin offered an exchange of hostages, but only after the announced deadline for the killing of Higgins was past.

According to a *New York Times* report, an aide to Rabin explained that the defense minister deliberately waited for the deadline on Higgins to pass, "to show that Israel could not be bullied by terrorists."

Following the kidnapping of Sheik Abdul Karim Obeid, Robert Dole, Republican minority leader in the U.S. Senate, complained, "Perhaps a little more responsibility on the part of the Israelis . . . would be refreshing."

An August 1 *New York Times* editorial rebuked Dole.

"As a matter of principle and common sense," the paper asserted, "Israel and other nations subjected to terrorism have a right to preemptive and punitive action."

"Yes, that includes military operations for both rescue of hostages or kidnapping of terrorists."

In New York, James Harris, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor, condemned the *Times*' declaration as "inciting more lawless terrorism by the Israeli government."

Harris declared August 1 that the way to defuse the present crisis is for the Israeli government to release Sheik Obeid.

Israeli commandos had descended on

Obeid's apartment, seizing him and two others at gunpoint. A neighbor who poked his head out the door to see what was happening was shot dead.

Israeli officials assert Obeid is a leader of the Party of God, which is based among Shiite Muslims who oppose Israeli intervention in Lebanon. Washington asserts that it takes orders from the Iranian government.

Responding to the *Times*, Harris declared, "Israel is not the victim of terrorism. It is a prime perpetrator of terrorism."

For 20 months now, he said, "the Israeli government has used unrestrained terrorism against the Palestinian people of the West Bank and Gaza Strip."

"For demanding nothing more than their democratic right to self-determination," Harris said, "more than 600 Palestinians have been killed, and thousands more beaten and wounded, or imprisoned without charges."

Israeli contempt for law, he added, was given recent graphic expression when Ariel Sharon, a member of the Israeli cabinet,

publicly called for the assassination of Yassir Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Last year, he pointed out, Israeli commandos murdered Khalil al-Wazir, a central leader of the PLO.

Nor, Harris said, has Israeli blood-letting been limited to Palestinians. The Lebanese people have been a major victim of Israeli state terrorism.

Harris recalled Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon. In the first several months of that war alone, 27,000 Lebanese people and Palestinian refugees were killed. At least 400,000 were left homeless.

To this day, the Israeli regime illegally occupies a border area of Lebanon from which its troops regularly make strikes into adjacent areas.

Harris renewed his party's demand that Washington end its military and economic aid to Israel. He called for opposition to any U.S. moves of aggression against Lebanon or Iran.

Aug. 26 march set to protest court rulings against affirmative action

BY KATHIE FITZGERALD

DETROIT — The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has called a march for August 26 in Washington, D.C., to protest the recent Supreme Court setbacks to affirmative action.

The NAACP national convention held here last month adopted a resolution calling on members and others to "mount powerful demonstrations" to show their outrage at the Supreme Court rulings.

The delegates responded enthusiastically to NAACP Executive Director Benjamin Hooks' call for the action. "We've lost a lot of civil rights in this country," explained one

delegate, "and we have to get them back. That's where the power is," she said in support of the demonstration.

Hooks said the protest would be a "silent march" to recall a 1917 march by several thousand Blacks in New York City protesting lynchings in the United States. August 26 is also the anniversary of the historic 1963 civil rights march on Washington.

"We're not going to let four men and a woman in black robes turn us around any more than we'll let white robes turn us around," Hooks said and called on civil rights leaders to join the march.